LITERACY AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

T*he main target and goal of this writing is to show the information of global demographic and technological changes that has happened so rapidly in both domestic and international arenas, therefore, the society should effort seriously in order that they can adapt easily. As everybody knows, that the development of science, knowledge, and technology is so fast, excelencent, and amazing, they never thought before that it is beyond their imagination. Society/people should enlarge and enrich their sience and knowledge for anticipating of cultural and technological shock, if not, they will be left behind, so far and so primitive in this modern era.*

Key words: *anticipating; information; knowledge; science; technology.*

Introduction

- As we enter the twenty-first century, global demographic and technological changes are leading to unprecedented levels of intercultural contact in both domestic and international arenas. Immigration inwestern Europe, Australia, and North America is creating new "multicultural" societies where rapid linguistic, cultural, and political change is endemic.
- Satellite television bring news, images, and entertainment from around the world. Computer network provide new platforms for interpersonal communication, as well as novel means publishing, linking, and accessing huge amount of information from every corner of the globe. For those of us who teach languages, these changes present exciting new oppurtunities as well as significant challenges.
- Communicating successfully in another language means shifting frames of reference, norms, assumptions of what we can and cannot be said, what has to be explicit and what ought to remain tacit, and so on.
- In other words, using another languages effectively involves mare than vocabulary and structures; it involves thinking differently about languages and communication.
- Cultural literacy curriccula orient us inward, averting our eyesfrom the cultural diversity that characterizes our own countries and our global community. Even more unfortunate, the 'facts' of cultural literacy are to be internalized without discussion, exploration, or critical inquiry ... (Cummings and Sayers 1995)

Why "Literacy"?

- It felicitously conveys a broader scope than the terms reading, writing and thus permits a more unified discussion of relationship between readers, writers, texts, culture and language learning.

- It is important to recognize that literacy means different things to different people.
- It is commonly define as the ability to read and write.
- At the lower levels of most foreign language curricula, literacy is conceived as being text centric, rather than reader or writer centric.
- They focus on basic ability in reading and writing in introductory and intermediate courses, and on literacy and cultural knowledge in advanced courses.
- Teaching is typically focused on correctness and convention (knowledge standard norm of grammar, spelling, usage, and mechanics), and involved instruction in at least one priviliged types of writing: Essay.
- At the upper end of the curriculum, two additional strands of literacy come into play.
- The high cultural strand, involve the transmission of cultural knowledge and the development of aesthetic appreciation, literary sensibility, and cultivated spirit.
- The text centric, cultural, and cognitive skills views of literacy share a number of limitation in the context of second and foreign language education.
- First, they reify literacy as an end product of instruction instead of as a variable set of processes contingent on textual, cognitive, and social factors.
- Second, these definition of literacy tend to exclude contextual factors – how people in different communities produce and use texts in different ways.
- In viewing literacy primarely as individual, in the head of phenomenon, a private repertoire of abilities and knowledge-educators often disregard significant differences in the purposes, functions, and social value of literacy across cultural context.
- A good deal of research has shown that purposes of reading and writing are neither individually autonomous nor universal in nature, but rather arise from particular social and cultural needs and expectations (Scribner and Cole 1981, Heath 1983, Street 1984).
- Third, traditional views of literacy are largely incompatible with the goals of communicative language teaching because they emphasize presciptive norms rather than approprieteness of use.

Notion of Literacy

Reading and Writing are forms of life, not just the reflections of it. Geoffrey H. Hartman(1996)

- The French class begins, teacher warms up the students by asking questions in French, using the material covered during the previous week;
- The teacher and students then open the book entitled "La Famille Franscaise" which presents a variety of demographic facts about families in France, describes commonalities and differences across social classes, and discusses a number of differences and similiarities between the typical custom of France and American families.

Principles of a sociocognitive view of literacy

- Literacy involves interpretation-Writers and readers act of interpretation, Writer interpret the world and the reader then interpret the writers interpretation in term of his own conception of the world.
- Literacy involves collaboration-Writers write for an audience, even if they write for themselves.
- Literacy involves conventions- How people read and write texts is not universal, but governed by cultural conventions that evolve through use and are modified for individual purposes.
- Literacy involves cultural knowledge-Reading and writing function within particular systems of attitudes, beliefs, custom, ideals, and values.

- Literacy involves problem solving-Because words are always embedded in linguistic and situational contexts, reading and writing involve figuring out relationships between larger units of meaning, and between texts and real or imagined worlds.
- Literacy involves reflection and self reflection- Readers and writers think about language and its relations to the world and themselves
- Literacy involves language use-Literacy is not just about writing systems, not just about lexical and gramatical knowledge; it requires knowledge of how language is used in spoken and written context to create discourse
- Shifting paradigms in language teaching
- In 1960s British Linguist M Halliday and American Sociolinguist Dell Hymes argued that the individual sentence was too narrow a lens to look through if one wanted to understand language as it used in social practice.
- Because the structure of a given sentence is influenced by the larger textual structure in which it is embedded, Halliday argued that texts, not sentences, ought to be the basic unit of linguistic analysis.
- Halliday and Hasan (1976) define "text" as any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that forms aunified whole.
- Hymes, who coined the term "communicative competence", expressed in his well known remark " There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes 1971:10).
- Halliday and Hymes's contribution to a broader, socially-based view of language set the stage for the development of communicative approach to language teaching.
- During 1970s and 1980s, language education called for a pedagogy that shifted emphasis away from language usage to language use (Widdowson 1978), from language as code to language as communication in social context (Breen and Candlin 1980).

Some changes in instructional focus commonly associated with this shift.

- Language as autonomous structural system-Language as social phenomenon.
- Product orientation-Process orientation
- Focus on isolated sentences-Focus on connected stretches of language
- Focus on texts as displays of vocabulary and grammar structure-Focus on texts realized as communicative acts
- Teaching of prescriptive norm-Attention to register and style variation
- Focus on mastery of discrete skills- Fokus on self expression
- Emphasis on denotative meaning-Emphasis on communicative value in context

Multiple perspectives on literacy

- Literacy is an elastic concept: its meaning varies according to the diciplinary lens through which one examines. Ostensibly reffering to reading and writing, literacy can be viewed as a technique, as a set of language skills, cognitive abilities, as a group of social practices, or as Brand (1990) puts it "a part of the highes human impulse to think and rethink experience in place".
- Literacy is moveable target from an historical too, although, litteratus, its etymological root, reffered to learnedness in latin, literacy has reffered to the ability to write one's name.

Linguistic dimension of literacy

- Literacy has to do with people's use of written language. Its etymological link to the latin littera, literacy involves mastery of a writing system and its attendant conventions.

- But, literacy has to do, first and foremost with language and knowledge of how it is used, and only secondary with writing system.
- Halliday (1989) claims, that writing tends to be more lexically dense and less grammatically intricate than speech.

Sociocultural dimension of literacy

- In the second/foreign language teaching profession, the predominance of cognitive research on L2 reading and writing makes it easy to forget that language that literacy is socially constructed phenomenon, not a naturally occuring process.
- Scribner (1984) reminds us, people whose language is not written do not become literate.
- Frrom a sociocultural perspective, reading and writing are communicative acts in which readers and writers position one another in particular ways, drawing on conventions and resources provided by the culture.
- Texts do not arise directly and naturally from thought, but develop out of an interaction between reader and writer.

Communication, literacy and language learning

- Literacy is not the narrow ability to deal withtexts but the broader ability to deal with other people as a writer or reader. Deborah B (1990)
- Francois G, a nineteeenth century Frech pedagogue, described in great detail his attempt to learn German via what we might call a classicall literacy approach based on grammar books, dictionaries, and textual translation.
- "To learn first words, then the rules for grouping these words, and of these to make up sentences, this seemed to me to include the whole art, secret, philosophy of the teaching languages" (Francois 1894: 10).

Conduits, containers, and communication

- We use language in straight forward, literal way in our ordinary everyday transsactions, to say what we means as a plainly as possible in order to avoid ambiguity and misunderstandings.
- A speaker or writer begins with a message, which is encoded and sent via a channel to another person. This person receives the coded message as an auditory or visual stimulus, which must be decoded to to reconstitute the original message.
- Assuming that, a. Both the sender and receiver know the code, b. The signal has not been degraded en route, c. The receiver is attentive, the message can be expected to arrive intact.
- That is to say that the receiver now has the same information, ideas, or thoughts that the sender originally encoded.

Limitation of the conduit/Container model

- First, by suggesting that meaning exist a priory, no account is taken of the inte-ractive, collaborative, and intersubjective dimension of communication. When people talk, listen, read or write, meaning is jointly constructed by the participants involved.
- In order to know what/how to say it, speakers and writers should take their audience into account: one ussualy does not say something to an adult in the same way that one would say it to a small child (if one does, that manner of speaking itself conveys its own message).
- Second, Speakers and writers do not transfer meaning as much as provide linguistic cues that allows others to predict and reconstruct meaning.
- Third, contrary to Buttler's claim, words are not neutral references to universal notions.

- Fourth, Communication is rarely just a matter of encoding and decoding literal messages.
- Fifth, even clear, understandable texts are always informationally incomplete, leaving unsaid what reader and listener can be expected to fill in from their knowledge of the world.

An alternative metaphor: design of meaning

- Language learning, as Halliday (1978) has described it, is learning how to mean-in socialcultural context in which the culture is itself constituted partly by language, other semiotic/ sign system.
- For Halliday, language is system of choice, a sytem of meaning potential. We come to any communicative event with knowledge of the potential sets of choices made available to us by our language.
- The notion of desain connects powerfully to the sort of creative intelligence the best practitioners need in order to be able, continually, to redesign their activities in the very act of practice.
- It connects well to the idea that learning and productivity are the result of the designs of complex system of people, environments, technology, beliefs, and texts. (New London Group 1996: 73)

Design and Language Learning

- Bakhtin (1986: 89) described it, a process of assimilation-more or less creative-of others' words, which carry with them, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework and re-accentuate.

Available Design: resources for making meaning.

- Harold R (1984: 14) puts it; communication is a matter of playing the game of free choice according to the rules.
- How might we visualize the relationship among these resources and constraint in the process of reading and writing?

- What must also be taken into accounts are epistimological consideration that not only underlie rhetorical conventions but even more importantly frame what writing, reading, and learning are all about in given community and culture.

Available Design for literacy

- There is always room for creativity in any discursive order, but it is attained by mastering the practice of the discourse to a degree that enables new utterance to be formed, which in turn become a part of the body of discursive models and finally effect changes in the code itself. Robert S (1985)
- We can think of meaning resources, or available designs, as roughly organized along a continuum, which linguistic resources such as writing system, vocabulary, grammar and cohesion conventions at one hand, and schematic resources such as rhetorical organization patterns, genres, styles, schemata, and stories at the other.

Linguistic resources

- The most fundamental of available designs is language itself. The most obvious and essential differences between reading and writing in one's native language versus a foreign language is that one is operating with a new set of linguistic resources.

Writing system and Media

- The first thing that strikes beginning language students is the way the new language sound and the way it looks on paper. Coulmas (1989) makes a useful distinction between writing systems, scripts, and orthographies.
- Scripts are particular manifestation of a given writing system (Roman, Greek, Arabic, etc) and may or may not be language specific.
- Orthographies are language-specific conventions (accents, spelling rules, and other marks) that may differentiate among varieties within the languages (American

vs British English, Chinese vs Taiwanese, etc)
- Vocabulary-In the areas of reading and listening, when students have only 1000-2000 words is not enough, they must have larger vocabulary in order to understand most unsimplified speech or writing. (Saragi, Nation, and Meister 1978)
- Syntax-In order to use words to produce and understand sentences, we need to know the rule that govern syntatic relation and clause structure.
- Cohesion and Coherence-Both of them imply unity and connectedness, the essential difference between the terms is that cohesion operates in texts, and coherence operates in discourse.

Schematic resources
- Formal schemata-A central tenet of schema theory is that people's existing knowledge is not a random assortment of facts, but rather is organized systematically in networks of knowledge structures called schemata.
- Rumelhart (1981: 9) defined a schema as a kind of informal, private, unarticulated theory about the nature of events, objects, or situations which we face.
- Rhetorical organization pattern- Meyer (1975) found that five expository organizational patterns (collection, description, causation, problem/solution, and comparison) had differential effects on native English readers' recall of text information. schemata
- Genres-Although in literary studies genre has traditionally referred to the principal types of literary production (novels, plays, short stories, poems, etc), linguistic definition extend beyond literary texts to include a broad spectrum of spoken and written discourse forms (conversation, editorial, research article, interview, campain speech, form letter, joke, and lecture)
- Style-It has to do with the individual and particular ways in which those global functions and schemes of texts, are expressed or manifested toward particular communicative ends.
- Content schemata and cultural model-It will be recalled, have to do with knowledge of the topic of the text (American stock exchange, French revolution, etc), even structures (Script of roles and action involve in activities)
- Stories- Because the stories we read and hear about the event, places, and people can exert a greater influence on our schemata and interpretations than direct experience itself, examination of the stories told within a culture can help us to learn about that culture.

Conclusion
- To contrast the view of literacy developed with the more conventional view that has predominated in FL education, it is not seen as a uniform and universal construct, but rather as a dynamic set of linguistic, social, and cognitive processes that are culturally motivated.
- Literacy includes both spoken and written language in its purview, and considers these to be partially overlapping rather than dichotomous, it aknowledges the holistic, unified nature of what has traditionally been treated separately as reading, writing, speaking, and listening in FL pedagogy.
- Finally, the view of literacy presented here combines a focus on language use in social context with additional component of active reflection on how meanings are constructed and negotiated in particular acts of communication.
- I have presented communicative ability and literacy as the essential bases of foreign language study in academic contact. Moreover, I have argued that literacy and communicative are not divergent goals but are in facts intrinsically interwined as dimensions of meaning design.

- One implication of this point for classroom teaching is that language learners' reading and writing difficulties may not be due so much to a lack of vocabulary and syntax knowledge per se, but rather to different understandings of the world of communication and literacy.
- We have examined a number of the diverse but highly interelated resources we draw on conciously or unconciouslyin understanding and creating meaning from texts.

- These resources, Available designs, provide a heuristic mattric of potentials and constraints that allow us to communicate, despite the inevitable incompleteness and inexplicitness of speech andailable design writing.
- We have seen that vocabulary, grammar, sound, and writing systems are necessary, but not sufficient resources for communicative language use, and yet these are frequently the only available design explicitly addressed in language teaching.

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