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ECHO AND ARTIFACT: THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRINT CODES AND ORAL CODES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

---

by
James R. Murphy
May 1990

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May 1990

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ABSTRACT

How we, as Composition instructors, and students of writing, view the relationship between oral and written language and the effect of that relationship on the acquisition, production, and processing of language will affect the approach we take to writing and the teaching of writing. It is, therefore, important that we explore how speech and writing influence one another in order to derive a theoretical framework that is apt to guide our practice in a positive way.

Chapters One and Two of this thesis examine the characteristics of speech and writing in an attempt to understand how they are acquired, produced, and processed. Chapter Three explores language transfer theory and two main theoretical perspectives on the effect that speech has on the acquisition of writing skills. Finally, Chapter four discusses some of the pedagogical implications of the theory that holds that though speech and writing are related in some important ways, they are essentially two unique sets of codes.

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"No one has more language than he has learned."
(John Milton Gregory)

CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTERISTICS OF SPEECH

To define oral language seems, on the surface, to be a simple task. If we limit ourselves to the physical production and consumption of oral language, it seems obvious that speech is sound which is transmitted through the speaker's mouth and is received by the listener's ear and, if we want to be more sophisticated, decoded in the aural centers of the listener's brain. This is indeed a definition of oral language, but, like any monolithic definition of language, it is woefully inadequate and leaves undiscussed many of its important characteristics. Both oral and written language, the two main manifestations of human language, are just too complex to admit to simplicity. In addition to their extremely abstract nature, neither is a unified phenomena, but rather each mode allows a "multiplicity of styles" (Chafe 84). It is perhaps more productive to simply explore the characteristics common to oral speech rather than to attempt to derive a single complete definition.

Living as we do in a culture so heavily influenced, indeed dominated, by the written word, it is difficult for us to discuss oral language in a pure sense. Actually, it may be virtually impossible for us to even conceive of the

psychology of primary orality (Havelock, Muse 64-5). Even the oral language we are accustomed to is, as Ong refers to it, "secondary orality." That is, our oral language is not purely oral, but is heavily influenced by literacy ("Writing" 24-5). We can, however, make some fundamental observations about oral language from what we know of its manifestations in children, by what we can observe in cultures less influenced by writing and by what we can learn from historical inquiry into ancient pre-literate societies.

To begin with, beyond the simple physical elements of speech production, it is important to know that speech is a system of signs. A sign, in the case of oral language, is the arbitrary union of a concept and a sound-image (Scinto 10). In other words, speech is a manifestation of the union of thought and sign. According to Vygotsky, thought and speech have different roots in their development within the individual. With reference to child development, Vygotsky states that there is a well established "pre-intellectual stage" as well as a "pre-linguistic stage." Up to a certain point in time, these two faculties follow a separate line of development independently of one another. "At a certain point these lines meet, whereupon thought becomes verbal and speech rational" (Vygotsky 83).

Vygotsky goes on to say that it is at this point that concept formation begins to be mediated by the sign.

Indeed, he states that "real concepts are impossible without words" and that "thinking in concepts does not exist beyond verbal thinking" (107). Vygotsky discusses in depth the thought processes that lead up to concept formation; he does acknowledge a "vast area of thought that has nothing to do with speech" (88). But put simply, the child interacts with the objects and people that make up its environment until it eventually moves from associative thinking to the formation of concepts, and the union of those concepts with sound-images and the communication of the resulting signs through speech. What is important here is that the concept, that part of thought which is communicable, is mediated through the sign and manifested in what we hear as speech sounds.

Saussure has simplified this idea nicely in his discussion of the speech circuit:

> The [speech] act requires at least two individuals: without this minimum the circuit would not be complete. Suppose, then we have two people, A and B talking to each other. The starting point of the circuit is in the brain of one individual, for instance A, where facts of consciousness which we shall call concepts are associated with representations of linguistic signs or sound patterns by means of which they may be expressed. Let us suppose that a given concept triggers in the

> brain a corresponding sound pattern. This is an entirely psychological process: the brain transmits to the organs of phonation an impulse corresponding to the pattern. Then sound waves are sent from A's mouth to B's ear: a purely physical process. Next, the circuit continues in B in the opposite order: from ear to brain, the physiological transmission of the sound pattern; in the brain, the psychological association of this pattern with the corresponding concept. (Saussure 11-12)

There are at least two very important ideas that emerge out of this discussion thus far: First, speech production is essentially a social act, even from the earliest attempts by the child. "The primary function of speech, in both children and adults, is communication, social contact" (Vygotsky 34). In other words speech is learned from and produced for others; the community is essential for the development of the human capacity for language (Saussure 19; Scinto 76). Second, the concept, that which is communicated, is comprised of experience, or memory (Saussure 19; Vygotsky 135). It is not difficult to see that these two, social interaction through language, and memory, have a reciprocal relationship in language development; once one begins to use language to order and communicate experience, it becomes a cumulative process.

Concepts are stored in words which in turn, by directing, controlling, and channeling mental operations toward the solutions to problems, give access to more concepts (106). Thus memory is enhanced by language and language by memory. In short, "language as a symbolic vehicle comes into being in the very act of its production" (Scinto 73).

Most experts agree that the bulk of first language acquisition takes place at a very young age. In terms of oral language, children have "completed the greater part of the basic language-acquisition process by the age of five" (Moskowitz 46):

> By that time a child will have dissected the language into its minimal separable units of sound and meaning; she will have discovered the rules for recombining sounds into words, the meanings of individual words and the rules for recombining words into meaningful sentences, and she will have established herself linguistically as a full-fledged member of a social community informed about the most subtle details of her native language as it is spoken in a wide variety of situations. (46)

In short, by the age of five most children will have internalized an impressive set of rules which they use to produce and interpret the oral language code. We normally refer to these rules that govern language as grammar.

Grammar is made up of rules which govern: phonology, the way sounds are put together to form words; syntax, the way words are put together to form sentences; semantics, the way the meanings of words are interpreted; and pragmatics, the way one participates in a conversation, "how to sequence sentences and how to anticipate the information needed by an interlocutor (47). These rules are internalized without, for the most part, the benefit of formal training so that both their acquisition and use are largely unconscious processes. Children are bathed in linguistic input from those around them, formulate rules whereby they attempt to understand and use language, and spend a great deal of time practicing language use in order to test the hypotheses they have formulated about language.

Much about language acquisition is still a mystery, but researchers do know that the acquisition process takes place in stages according to the developmental stages of the child and that it can not be hurried. Indeed, Moskowitz states that it is "virtually impossible to speed up the language-learning process" (53). It simply takes time for rules to be formulated, tested, and altered to incorporate new input. Aside from the fact that the rate of the acquisition process is limited by the growth and development of the child, there is also a limit on the rate at which linguistic input can be

integrated into the already existing rules that the child has established.

Perhaps one way of understanding this process is through the concept of schema formation. Human beings are by nature pattern makers and pattern seekers. We tend to see the world through patterns we have constructed and, through the use of these internal patterns (or perspectives), attempt to identify other patterns of organization external to ourselves that we can understand and integrate into our own (Fromkin and Rodman 335). These patterns, both the ones we look through (internal) and the ones we look at (external), play a central role in the way we acquire knowledge, in this case language. E. D. Hirch's explanation of schema is helpful: "A person learns something new by building on a schema already known, and in practical knowledge the already known form is a productive "schema" for performing a task" (159). For instance, tennis coaches will often teach a novice how to grip a tennis racket by shaking hands with the student. What the student knows about a handshake transfers positively to gripping the tennis racket (159). But how does one learn without having had previous, transferable knowledge? There seems to be little understanding of the ways infants first begin forming schemata, but it seems clear that once the schemata are

formed they begin operating as Hirch describes. Put simply, children attempt to know based on what they already know.

Traditionally, oral language is considered the primary and natural manifestation of language. Certainly, chronologically, there is little doubt that it is primary. Also, we need no tools other than what we were created with to produce speech---we have the natural biological capacity for oral language. But, we also need a language community in order to develop this natural capacity.

We begin learning it at the breast. Walter Ong discusses at length the relationship between early language development and the child's relationship to its mother. The child's earliest existence is normally in close proximity to its mother. "The mother's closeness is not only biological and psychological. It is linguistic as well" (Interfaces 23). Much of our cultural and personal identity is derived from our mother. "Our world is a fragment of hers" (23). Ong points out that our association with "mother" is more than simple close proximity, but that "an infant's contact with its mother is a distinctively oral and lingual one in more ways than one. Tongues are used early for both suckling and for speaking. . ." (24). The mother tongue is what "introduces us as human beings into the human lifeworld" (23). One of Ong's points here is that our "mother tongue" gives us not only a connection to the

conventions of the community, but also an intimate connection to our environment. In short, it is the mother tongue that first enables us to order, store and communicate our experience.

Oral language is participatory. It is marked most of all by proximity: proximity to other speakers and listeners, and therefore proximity to the context of language production and consumption; proximity to objects; and proximity to the present. Oral language is here and now. It is evanescent; no sooner is the sound produced than it is going out of existence (24-5). As we have already discussed, there must be at least two participants in any exchange of language. There must be at least two interlocutors to complete the discourse "circuit." As a result, most informal conversation is dialogic. There is give and take. Often, the speaker will even try to elicit a response from the listener. Indeed, much discourse is shaped by this dialogue; the listener has as much to do with the production of speech as the speaker does. When two people come together to speak, each normally has the advantage of being close to either the speaker, when he or she is the listener, or the listener, when he or she is the speaker. In addition, in the case of the conversation of close friends, the participants often bring with them a history comprised of shared memories. They have experienced

many of the same things, they hold in common many concepts, and therefore many words. This familiarity carries with it a number of advantages to communication. Further, many argue that the language itself carries a cultural history. This implies that one need not talk to a close friend to communicate in a code heavily laden with cultural content and context; any two members of a given linguistic community will already hold a great deal of information in common.

When speech takes place face to face between two people who are familiar with one another and who are also aware of their surroundings, much of the language will reveal "the speaker's involvement with the audience, as well as the speaker's involvement with himself, and furthermore his involvement with the concrete reality of what is being talked about" (Chafe 105). As a result, much oral language is abbreviated (Goody 268). Often it is abbreviated to the point that when it is transcribed and read it can not be understood by a reader. This was vividly illustrated by the transcripts of the Nixon Whitehouse tapes. When the Watergate Committee read those transcripts hoping to gain significant information, they found that much of what they read was unintelligible. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is that in oral speech words do not bear all of the semantic load. There is much that is communicated by what linguists refer to as extra- or para-linguistic cues or

devices. In speech, the meaning of a word can depend as much on the voice and body movement of the speaker as the word that is spoken. A word can be changed to mean its opposite depending on voice tone. A wink of an eye can create irony. A listener can raise an eyebrow or change a facial expression to request more information or register approval or disapproval of what is said. The social standing of the conversants as well as the social situation may also set up a whole catalogue of assumptions under which the speaker and listener operate; these too will affect meaning. Even an increase or decrease by one of the participants in the distance between their bodies can have a dramatic effect on the discourse (Horowitz and Samuels 7).

There are other ways that proximity plays an important role in the character of oral communication. An utterance is not a thing, but rather an event tied to events and to time (Ong, "Writing" 25). Utterance is tied inexorably to the present; it exists only in that extremely short period of time that exists between the future and the past. Furthermore, in addition to the present, utterance is tied to place and to the things that make up that place. As a result, there is a closeness between a speaker and the objects and events that make up his or her environment that we often label "the here and now;" the utterance, the time and place of the utterance, and the speaker become

integrated to such a point as to be almost indivisible. Ong puts a similar phenomenon in almost mystical terms:

> Primary orality, the orality of a culture which has never known writing, is in some ways conspicuously integrative. The psyche in a culture innocent of writing knows by a kind of empathetic identification of knower and known, in which the object of knowledge and the total being of the knower enter into a kind of fusion. . . . .(Ong, Interfaces 18)

This must, of course, be kept in perspective. Ong is a modern literate who is as separated from the primary oral consciousness as any of us in his same condition. However, it is nevertheless an interesting construct and is perhaps helpful when it comes to separating the effects of speech and writing on consciousness.

It should be acknowledged that any use of language tends to put some distance between the speaker and the object named: for instance, when a child sees a tree and calls out to its mother "Tree!" As Ong suggests, "he or she puts the object 'out there' as different from self and mother and from other diversely named objects as well" ("Writing" 37). Even so, the fact that oral language is bound up in the fabric of real time, the "interpersonal sound world", and the real "human lifeworld" makes the speaker's relationship to the people and objects in the

surrounding environment intimate as compared to the separation brought about by the decontextualization inherent in the nature of writing (38). This will be discussed in more detail in chapter two.

But even though the use of any language puts distance between the language user and whatever is being named (as many post structuralists and post moderns would hasten to point out), there are limits to the objectivity one can achieve through speech. Because utterance is limited to the present, and because short-term memory can only process the information contained in approximately six words, oral cultures, for instance, had to invent ways to commit discourse to long-term memory so that it could be preserved (Chafe 95). In order to store and retrieve information, an oral culture has to develop forms that facilitate recall (Olson 263). These forms tend to be markedly formulaic and patterned: "antithesis, epithets, assertive rhythms, proverbs, and other formulas of many sorts" (Ong, Interfaces 191). The familiar stories and the rhyme and rhythm of poetry made memorization possible (Havelock, Muse 45). In oral cultures, such as the pre-literate Greek culture, much of the process of education was given over to the memorization of poetry. As an example, Eric Havelock cites the memorization process used by the early Greeks as an example of the low level of objectivity even in preserved

oral communication. The Greek student had to closely identify with the narrative of the poetry that was being memorized, much like a present day actor identifies with the lines in a performance. "You threw yourself into the situation of Achilles, you identified with his grief or anger. You yourself became Achilles and so did the reciter to whom you listened" (Preface 45). Havelock points out that the psychic powers necessary to memorize so much poetry "could be purchased only at the cost of total loss of objectivity" (45). This loss of distance becomes important later when we discuss the development of writing and its effect on consciousness.

The character of utterance, particularly that which is informal, is shaped to a large degree by its ties to context and the present. As we have already observed, oral language tends to be abbreviated, largely because of its contextualization; it is usually dialogic (in its pure form) and is dependent on extra-linguistic cues for cohesion. Also, it tends generally to be event oriented, because it itself is an event in time. Consequently, it is often found in the form of narrative; that is, it is often used to tell stories, to describe action and to relay events. In addition to these properties, utterance has other features worth noting that will have a bearing on our later discussion of writing.

Because it is produced spontaneously over time, speech tends to be fluid and non-editable. Speakers frequently exhibit hesitancy when composing and their speech is almost always marked by false starts and repetition. Also, because it is produced so rapidly, speech tends to have lexical limitations. Quite simply, speakers have only a short period of time in which to choose words appropriate to communicate what they are thinking (Chafe 87). As a result, speakers often operate within a much narrower range of lexical choices. "Producing language on the fly, they hardly have time to sift through all the possible choices they might make and typically settle on the first words that occur to them" (88). One result of this limit on word choice is the cataloguing by speakers of frequently used words and phrases that we often refer to as cliches.

However, even though oral language usually does not draw from a large lexicon, and though it is often marked by stock phrases and cliches, it is also characterized by innovation. Whereas text, because it is an artifact and is preserved as a concrete thing, is conservative, utterance is characterized by freshness and newness. New words are constantly being invented and borrowed from other languages at a rate much faster than in writing (Horning 11). One need only spend a short time around a group of young people to find that they use many new and unrecognizable words.

The new words and phrases currently used to describe the production of emesis alone is at the very least staggering.

Further lexical features of oral language include: The tendency to use short words; a preference for verbalization; a small variety in the selection of adjectives; more personal pronouns; a greater use of words derived from Anglo-Saxon as distinct from Latin (Goody 263).

Another interesting feature of oral speech is that it tends to be composed of simple linear structures characterized for the most part by paratactic patterns with limited subordination (Horowitz and Samuels 9). A good example of a paratactic pattern is the classic phrase attributed to Caesar, "I came; I saw; I conquered." Parataxis relates phrases, clauses or complete sentences equally. In this example the clauses are not subordinated to one another but simply juxtaposed so that it is left up to readers, or listeners, to determine their relationship according to cause or time (Lanham 33).

Many of these lexical and syntactical features of speech become more interesting when they are contrasted with the properties of the written word. Because we learn it as babies, we grow up thinking that speech is a simple thing. But an investigation of any depth will reveal the many complexities that make up the structure and use of oral language. As noted previously, as language learners we

internalize a very complex systemization of rules that govern phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. If we are speakers then we are amazingly adept at all of the many skills necessary to communicate. We read our audience and almost instantaneously select the appropriate structures and words. We construct highly complex forms characterized by intricate cohesive devices. And finally, as participants in an oral exchange, we are able to integrate a variety of verbal and visual stimuli to both produce and derive meaning. This is not to mention all of the extremely complex cognitive tasks necessary to acquire language in the first place. It would be a grave error to underestimate the sophistication necessary to learn and use oral language.

Indeed, speech is so complex that it defies adequate definition. However, looking at some of the characteristics of speech, as we have done here, should give us a good deal of insight as we begin looking into the phenomenon of writing as a manifestation of language. As we compare speech and writing it becomes clear that both are complex in their own way, and each plays its own important role in the acquisition, use, and understanding of language.

CHAPTER TWO

CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITING

Like speech, written language is a system of signs. However, unlike speech, written signs are visible rather than auditory. They are artifacts rather than echoes. They are generally transmitted through the hand, one way or another, and consumed by the reader's eye. In the brain, writing may be decoded in either the visual or aural centers (Montgomery 60).

Of the 4,000 languages that exist in the world today, all of the ones that have a written form are comprised of one of two systems of signs: The ideographic and the phonetic. The ideographic system uses a distinctive sign that is not related to sound. "The sign represents the entire word as a whole, and hence represents indirectly the idea expressed" (Saussure 26). Chinese is a prime example of the ideographic system. Because the written sign in Chinese has developed separately from the Chinese sound system, there has arisen in China a multiplicity of dialects so that even though two Chinese may be able to read the same text and derive the same meaning from it, when they speak to one another they are mutually unintelligible.

In a phonetic system, however, the written signs were developed to represent "the sequence of sounds as they occur in the word" (26). Some phonetic systems are syllabic, some are alphabetic. English is a good example of the alphabetic

phonetic system. Because the English alphabet is representative of sound, it has been traditionally held that written English is secondary and parasitic to spoken English. Certainly, in terms of chronology, we learn writing after we have learned to speak. It does not seem that we learn to write "naturally" because we do not learn it informally as we do speech. We learn it formally through very structured teaching. Though it is found other places, writing is the language of the school (Olson 270): We are taught writing in the school; we practice it by reading and writing for our teachers; and, even though speech does necessarily have a prominent place in communication within the school, it is speech heavily influenced by the schemata of writing and therefore secondary to writing in both importance and influence. Therefore, because the environment in which it is taught and the way it is taught are so heavily laden with explicit conventions, writing is often seen as artificial.

However, it could be argued that if, as Saussure says, all signs are arbitrary (assigned by convention), then in this respect both oral and written language are artificial. In addition, as Robert L. Allen states, "Such conventions as paragraphing, punctuation, and spelling are just as truly conventions of the English language as are different degrees of stress or different levels of pitch" (349). It should be

noted also that human beings seem to have the natural capacity to produce and process both types of language. It would seem, then, that both speech and writing are a mix of nature and convention. Humans have the biological capacity for the acquisition, production and processing of the conventions of oral and written language that are taught and learned within any given community. But perhaps the artificial nature of writing is most clearly manifest in the fact that, unlike speech, it is produced, transmitted, and stored through the use of tools; we write it with pens and typewriters, and now computers, and store it on paper and magnetic disks. And so, because of the technology involved, writing is a thing which seems external to us as beings.

The implications of the external nature of writing are vast. The fact that writing makes language a thing that exists independent of us has revolutionary effects on both cultures and individuals. The Ancients knew well that writing had the potential to bring about radical change in society and individual consciousness. In the _Phaedrus_ Plato has Socrates relate the myth of the Egyptian god, Theuth, and an Egyptian king, Thamus, in which Theuth when asked by the king about the value of writing says, "Here, O king, is a branch of learning that will make the people of Egypt wiser and improve their memories. . ." (274 E). However, in response the king offers,

> If men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls: they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks; what you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder. (275 A)

As Walter Ong interprets the Phaedrus, whatever may be the motives behind Plato putting such words in the mouth of Socrates who in turn puts them into the mouths of Theuth and Thamus, at the very least he was warning his readers (interesting) that there were some potential pitfalls associated with writing. It is an inhuman thing, he says, artificial, outside the mind. It is unresponsive to questioning and therefore adialectical. It can not defend itself. It can not choose its audience. It weakens the mind and the memory ("Writing" 28-9). However true these criticisms are, the first thing one notices is that Plato set them down in writing.

Indeed, it is the very nature of writing that allows Plato his philosophy (29). Prior to writing, the kind of extended linear analysis needed for the philosophic life was impossible. With the advent of the written word, the use of language was no longer tied to short term memory. Ideas could be written down and stored for later and repeated

contemplation. Elaborate and limitless discourse could be produced through careful planning and digested at a leisurely pace without distraction (Horowitz 18). Writing allowed for an "objective" distance from the environment; the writer and reader are isolated from the people, things, and ideas discussed. This would explain why in the Republic Plato has Socrates call for the expulsion of the poets, whose thought and teaching, because they were orally based, could only propagate a limited objectivity, or distance from what was discussed. In short, the poets and their teaching were the enemies of philosophy (Havelock, "Preface" 3-19).

As Ong points out, these "ideas" of Plato's are visually based, "coming from the same root as the Latin videre, meaning to see" (Ong, "Writing" 29). The Platonic model of intelligence is based on seeing, not on hearing:

> The Platonic ideas are not oral, not sounded, not mobile, not warm, not personally interactive. They are silent, immobile, in themselves devoid of all warmth, impersonal and isolated, not part of the human lifeworld at all but utterly above and beyond it, paradigmatic abstractions. (Ong "Writing" 29)

Put simply, writing distances and separates on a number of levels. First and foremost, it separates the knower from what is known and as a result, as we have already discussed, promotes objectivity.

> Written language represents phenomena as if they were products. Spoken language represents phenomena as if they were processes. In other words: speaking and writing---each one makes the world look like itself. A written text is an object; so what is represented in writing tends to be given the form of an object. (Halliday 74)

This separation and its derivative objectivity is perhaps the foundation of modern science (Olson 263). Interestingly, the initial alienation brought about by writing eventually leads to an even greater intimacy, a deeper knowing.

Writing separates the word from sound. Writing is not sound but a representation of it. There is, of course, still a connection (text can be read aloud and print reconstituted into sound), but because text is removed from sound it is also removed from the human lifeworld; writing is an abstraction. "Written words then are symbols of symbols of symbols, the product of an ever more complex abstracting process" (Farrell 445). But more importantly, writing is an artifact. It exists independently of the one who produces it. Unlike sound it is not evanescent; it does not go out of existence once it is produced. By its very nature, then, it is language, and therefore thought, in storage. It no longer has to depend on devices of memory

for its existence. Because it is an object it can be written and re-written until the writer is satisfied with it. Because it can be changed, hesitancy becomes a virtue; the writer can go over and over the text, revising, reinventing, editing and re-editing until it is finally ready for release. Words can be chosen with great care until just the right one is found. And finally, on the other end of the process, the reader can scrutinize the text in great detail in order to determine and contemplate its meaning.

Text removes its source from its recipient. Whereas oral communication usually takes place with the speaker and listener face to face, the written word often separates writers and readers by great distances of both time and space (Smith 8). As a result the communication is decontextualized. As a reader, I am often no longer privy to the prior knowledge carried by the writer. I often do not know under what circumstances a given text was written. I do not have the advantage of being able to interpret and derive meaning from extra linguistic cues. I can only know what the writer explicitly tells me. In writing, the words themselves must carry a greater semantic load than they do in oral language. The writer must create context with text. Adequate communication rests entirely on the writer's

ability to eliminate as much ambiguity as possible so that there is no mistake as to meaning.

One of the problems with writing is that no matter how explicit a writer is, it is impossible to control where, under what circumstances, and by whom the text will be consumed. Not only does writing separate "here" from "there," it also separates "now" from "then." Though writing tends to change slowly, words, as references to culture and custom, tend to change over time making misunderstanding more and more likely as time passes. When Hamlet cries, "Get thee to a nunnery!" Ophelia certainly understands him differently than we might today; according to the usage at the time, Hamlet probably meant by "nunnery" the equivalent of what we today might call "whorehouse." On this point Socrates is correct; there is little a writer can do to control the text once it is written down and left to posterity (Plato 275 C). But this is also one of the charms of writing. Through text, we can communicate with the dead and with those yet unborn (Hirsch 45).

Writing, particularly academic writing, separates learning from wisdom (Ong "Writing" 41). In other words, writing separates theory from practice. But this separation is not necessarily negative; it also allows for the primacy of theory. Theory need not be dependent on practical experience, but rather, theories can be formulated which can

eventually be tested and confirmed in practice (Farrell 447). For instance, one need no longer depend on an apprenticeship for learning a particular discipline. As writing becomes more influential, the wisdom of the masters is put into text and abstracted from the real human lifeworld and made available to academics for their examination outside the context of where the knowledge was first worked out in practice (Ong, "Writing" 41). Once in text, that wisdom can be played with on paper until theories are derived from it that can again be tested in practice. Again, the subject-object distance brought about by writing is one of the main factors leading to the development of modern technology.

Finally, the ability to preserve thought in the form of text separates being from time. This separation manifests itself in a number of ways. As discussed above, the production of written language is not under the constraints of time in that writing can be edited and prepared before it is released; unlike speech, which affords little time for reflection and editing, writing need not be produced with the relative spontaneity of speech. On another level, text lives on into the future and so transcends the time of its production. But perhaps the most important way in which writing separates being from time is by freeing language from the constraints of narrative order. Unlike speech

which normally must formulate itself according to the chronology of events, writing is not constrained by such a time line. "Oral speech and thought narrativizes experience and the environment, whereas philosophy. . . is radically anti-narrative" (Ong, "Writing" 44). Whereas speech is often oriented to the story, which incorporates action and events, writing, in its most formal registers, is oriented to the idea and the argument (Horowitz and Samuels 9).

Among oral peoples, wisdom and the wise, often contained in proverbs, aphorisms, and heroic epics, are given a prominent place in society and transmitted faithfully by mouth from generation to generation, but the ideation and argumentation necessary for the existence of philosophy depends on the written word. Even academic talk, that used by university professors, attorneys, and the like, is heavily influenced, if not wholly generated, by writing.

> The elaborate, intricate, seemingly endless but exact cause-effect sequences required by what we call philosophy and by extended scientific thinking. . . depends upon writing and the revisionary, back-tracking operations made possible by such a time-obviating mechanism. (Ong, "Writing" 43)

These manifestations of elaborate thinking require elaborate structures. Speech depends heavily on paralinguistic

phenomena, repetition and mnemonic devices for cohesion and transmission, but writing must depend on complex hierarchical structures and multiple levels of subordination (Horowitz and Samuels 9). For example, writing, though it can and does make use of paratactic structures (Hemingway's prose would be an example), can perhaps be characterized by its reliance on hypotactic structures. Writing tends to establish cause and effect relationships more clearly than does speech. For instance, our example of a parataxis "I cam; I saw; I conquered" would, if phrased hypotactically, be rendered "'Since it was I who arrived, and I who saw how the land lay, the victory followed as a matter of course'" (Lanham 33). With the advent of these more elaborate structures, discourse is no longer dependent on temporal relationships alone but can now represent relationships spatially as well (Horowitz and Samuels 18).

In addition to being more elaborate in its structure, writing is also more elaborate lexically. With the constraint of time gone, a writer can take the time to choose just the right words to convey meaning with as little ambiguity as possible. As a result of greater lexical access the written word tends to exhibit lexical features different from those found in speech. In text, words tend to be longer. Because of the move away from narrative and toward abstraction there tends to be a preference by writers

for nominalization. Also, as a result of the combination of the increased use of nouns and increased lexical access, writing will often contain a greater number of adjectives than speech. One need only listen to conversations to discover a remarkable lack of adjectives; often, a particular expletive is used by modern conversants over and over again as a universal substitute for other, more descriptive adjectives. Another lexical difference between speech and writing is the use of fewer personal pronouns in writing, particularly the more formal written registers. Because of the objective nature of formal prose, the writer normally will hesitate to personally intrude into the text. Also related to the "objectivity" of written language is the increased use in writing of words derived from Latin, the language of science and, it is interesting to note, one of the languages that no longer exists as a mother tongue; it has been more and more abstracted from the human lifeworld (Goody 263). Finally, with access to an increased variety of words, the formulaic expressions and cliches of speech tend to fall away---"the cliches which oral cultures live on . . . literate cultures teach their members to scorn" (Ong, Interfaces 103).

It is difficult, if not impossible, for us as moderns to comprehend a world without the written word. We have inherited over two thousand years of literate habit

(Havelock, Muse 102); language as an artifact has become such a part of our consciousness that we even discuss orality in terms of literacy. We describe oral language, this evanescent, fleeting stuff, as if it were "some kind of material existing in some kind of space" (66). We use words like "patterns" and "codes" and "themes" and "monumental compositions" to describe the "substance" and "content" of language, even oral language (66). At best we may speak only of secondary orality---orality already under the influence of writing (Ong, Interfaces 298-299). It is therefore improbable that we can really grasp the significance of the impact that the advent of writing had on non-literate cultures. When echo becomes artifact it is forever changed. The way we know; the way we preserve what we know; the way we transmit what we know, both formally and informally; even what we know, is permanently and irretrievably altered. Knowledge and wisdom, once both communal and exclusively controlled by priests and wisemen, now becomes available to a wider audience and, at the same time, radically privatized; a writer writes alone, a reader reads alone, no longer is there the pressure of being before, or part of, a live audience. As Havelock demonstrates in his Preface to Plato, orality becomes the enemy of philosophy, and therefore education; society is divided so that, this time, distinctions are drawn between

the literate and the non-literate. Slowly, literacy, the child born of and nurtured by the mother tongue, matures and begins to order the household.

CHAPTER THREE

PRINT CODES V. ORAL CODES

Most of the time we tend not to separate speech as one manifestation of language from writing as another manifestation. Certainly, writing is not normally thought of as being as different from speech as say, Chinese is different from English. However more and more language experts are concluding that writing is a different code system and as such, an essentially different language from speech. Frequently however, many of us who are not experts tend to view writing as simply a concrete manifestation of speech; the written word is nothing more than a way of recording the spoken word. Perhaps this is why many believe that to speak well is to write well. However, many linguists and experts in the field of Composition are beginning to approach the teaching of writing as a second language rather than as simply an extension of speech. Horning, Hartwell, Falk, and both Robert and Virginia Allen are just a few who insist that to approach writing as anything but a second language is a mistake in pedagogy. As a result, these and others involved in composition and linguistic research view second language acquisition theory as fundamentally important in understanding written language acquisition.

Because writing is a language, it seems only logical that the acquisition of writing skill proceeds along some of

the same lines as the acquisition of speech. Certainly learners of writing use what schemata they have developed with regard to language and formulate hypotheses about writing based on those schemata. There are major gaps between what new writers know about oral language and what they know about speech, but they use what they do know about phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics to attempt to gain access to what they do not know about the conventions of writing. In other words they use what they know about their primary language, speech, to try to learn their second language, writing.

One of those at the forefront of second language theory is Stephen D. Krashen. In his work on second language learning, Krashen has formulated a theory that perhaps applies to the learning of writing. Horning, for one, has applied Krashsen's theory to writing acquisition (42). With regard to second language acquisition, Krashen describes the "acquisition process," as being separate from "learning". Acquisition takes place subconsciously and acquired language is used without a conscious observation of the rules that have been formulated. Learning, on the other hand, takes place consciously, as in a formal grammar class, when the language learner purposefully attempts to understand certain language rules (136). "'Normal' second language fluency

results from use of the acquired system, while conscious learning is only available as a monitor, or editor" (137).

To simplify Krashen's theory for the purposes of this discussion: Language that is acquired is language that can be used automatically without having to think about it. The language acquisition process operates continually, formulating and testing hypotheses, and establishing rules. It does this by encountering "comprehensible input" which is input that is just beyond the current level of the person who is acquiring the new language. The already established schemata that the person has formed works on the input and either rejects it or uses it to alter already established rules (138).

As a result of the interaction between what has been acquired and the new input, the person attempting to learn a second language will often construct language forms that are based on language rules from their primary language which results in what is termed "interlanguage." Interlanguage, then, is a combination of the primary language and the language the person is attempting to learn (target language). This application of the primary language rules to the target language can be seen as "interference" of the primary language with the target language, but it is part of the normal language acquisition process.

Another way that the acquisition process works is by overgeneralizing second language rules. The past tense marker is an example of a rule that is often overgeneralized. For instance, once language learners understand that -ed added to a word signifies past tense, as in "walked," they will often begin adding -ed to words inappropriately, as in "writed" or "speaked." Overgeneralization, then, is simply another attempt to apply rules to language (141-143). Eventually, under the right circumstances, both interlanguage forms and overgeneralizations will evolve into mature second language forms.

Another important concept that is part of Krashen's theory is the "affective filter hypothesis" which states that negative attitudes or low motivation blocks input, no matter how comprehensible, from the language acquisition device (140). A high affective filter, then, will stall the language acquisition process. As Krashen points out, the fastest language acquirers are those people who obtain the most comprehensible input and/or who have the lowest affective filter (140). It would seem, then, that when applying second language acquisition theory to the teaching and learning of writing that it would be helpful to be somewhat familiar with how the primary language (talk) and the target language (writing) are similar and different and

how they might be expected to affect one another. Armed with this knowledge, the writing teacher could then make language input comprehensible, lower affective filters, and recognize interlanguage formation and overgeneralization and deal with them appropriately.

But this is not a simple task. On the level of individual development, scholars, scientists, philosophers and teachers are still wrestling with the relationship between oral and written language: how one affects the development of the other and what effect they have alone and together on consciousness. According to Sandra Stotsky, there are a variety of theories having to do with the relationship of speech to written discourse. However, most of these explanations of the development of language ability are really variations of two main theories (371). In general, the first theory states that "oral language experience structures meaning in reading and writing at all levels of literacy development; reading and writing cannot independently influence each other" (372). Stotsky goes on to point out that, according to this first theory, "written language is not considered qualitatively different from oral language" (372). In short, written discourse is parasitic; it is totally dependent on oral language for much of its structure and meaning. Proponents of this theory believe that written language is simply a symbolic representation of

speech and that both the encoding process (writing) and the decoding process (reading) are translation processes in which the writer and reader either convert speech into written symbols or written symbols into speech.

The second theory, according to Stotsky's distillation of it, acknowledges that oral language does play a role in the initial development of written language. However, this theory also asserts that "not only may written language influence meaning in oral language, but reading and writing may also influence each other directly" (378). According to this view, then, written language may achieve a kind of autonomy from oral forms and indeed may at some point actually become dominant, and even influence oral language.

Understanding how these two theories differ in their basic assumptions may help us gain valuable insight into the relationship of oral language to written language which may, in turn, allow us to more intelligently approach the teaching of writing. While the first theory sees no qualitative difference between oral and written language, the second theory assumes that "oral and written language differ in both their origins and in their purposes and, accordingly, are qualitatively different in nature" (378).

One of the offshoots of the first theory is the research that attempts to define the relationship between "non-standard" dialects and writing. Often the term

"dialect interference" is used to describe the object of investigation. The theory behind this notion of dialect interference is that English dialects other than the "standard" transfer negatively into attempts by speakers of the dialect to generate academic prose (Hartwell, "Dialect" 101). It should be noted that what is referred to here is <u>not</u> second language interference. That is, dialect interference does not refer to writers for whom English is a second language, but rather, it refers to native English speakers that speak a dialect (frequently Black American English or BAE) other than that considered "standard." Virginia F. Allen defines this "standard" as "the variety of English generally used by the educated members of the American speech community" (359).

This is not a new concept, though most of the research is fairly recent. Perhaps one of the first manifestations of this idea that dialects interfere with writing was the old elocution movement popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hartwell, "Dialect" 101). The foundation of this movement was the belief that if one spoke correctly, one would write correctly. Hence the classic image of the old schoolmarm rigidly insisting on correct pronunciation and diction and dutifully correcting her students' every transgression. It seems logical to assume that if writing is simply a visual representation of speech,

then the closer one's speech is to the "standard," the more likely it is to transfer positively into one's writing. The problem with this assumption is that writing is not merely written down speech, or at least it should not be.

One can certainly understand how these ideas have emerged. There are undeniable connections between speech and the written word. After all, the alphabet does represent sounds. But to reduce their differences to simple differences between oral and visual representation of thought is misleading. Robert L. Allen begins to get at the problem when he calls writing a "separate dialect. . . with its own rules and conventions" (348). This is helpful but it does not go far enough. Indeed, writing and speech are separate in very important ways. However, to use the word "dialect" in reference to writing is to leave it in the category of speech. "Dialects" are spoken by speakers who transmit phonemes (sound). Writing on the other hand is represented entirely by graphemes---writing is a grapholect (Hirsch 45). As discussed earlier, speaking and writing, by their very natures (one echo, the other artifact) exhibit some vastly different characteristics and functions. "Related as they are, speaking and writing are nonetheless distinctly different communicative modes" (Cayer and Sacks 121). The oral and written modes are "fundamentally and essentially different as modes of verbal formulation and

expression, as indicators of different psychological aspects of the person, and as channels of communication" (Kroll 273).

First, writing is monologic (Collins 85); as we have already seen, the writer does not have the advantage of addressing an audience face to face. Of course, there are occasions when writing is quite direct, even intimate, and richly contextualized, but frequently readers do not have the benefit of either the prior knowledge carried by the writer or any direct knowledge of the context of the discussion, either visually or cognitively. Nor can a reader call for clarification. As a result, the writer is faced with the increased cognitive demands that accompany the necessity of producing explicit language that is able to "stand as an unambiguous or autonomous representation of meaning" (Olson 258). Of course, writing is never completely unambiguous, it is always subject to some degree of interpretation, but at the risk of oversimplifying, writers and readers have different tasks than do speakers and listeners: "A reader's task [is] to determine exactly what each sentence [is] asserting and to determine the presuppositions and implications of that statement." The writer, on the other hand, has "to create autonomous text---to write in such a manner that the sentence [is] an

adequate, explicit representation of meaning, relying on no implicit or personal interpretations" (268).

In short, the writer, in order to communicate competently, must become acutely aware of the demands of this new kind of audience. For instance, the ambiguous referent, used frequently and successfully in the context of speech to refer to people, places, and things already understood by the conversants, becomes a communication failure in written text (Flower 282). Depending on the social context, we tend to tolerate much more in speech than we do or can in many writing situations. "False starts, repetitions, pauses, extraneous words, sentence fragments, and even lack of agreement between subject and verb or between pronoun and antecedent" are all things many of us find perfectly tolerable in informal speech, but incompetent in formal academic writing (Robert L. Allen 350). But, once one begins to write, no longer do the conventions of speech govern the communicative act. In addition to simply having to be more explicit, writers must master a whole new set of language codes. Spelling, punctuation, sentence boundaries, paragraphing, even the spacing between words becomes extremely important.

Given the differences, then, between the codes and conventions that govern speech and those that govern writing, it would seem that beginning writers face not so

much a conflict of dialects as much as a conflict of conventions. Indeed, Patrick Hartwell insists that "dialect interference" in writing simply does not exist at all, but that "errors" in writing that can be attributed to oral language are more accurately attributable to the writer's failure to master the print codes ("Dialect" 101):

> The term print code, as used here, is seen to identify a layered set of cognitive abilities, stretching from matters of surface detail to abstract expectations and strategies for processing print as reader and writer. Literate readers and writers, for example, have mastered the meaning relationships signaled by punctuation, while developing readers and writers will exhibit, in their writing and in their reading, only partial mastery of that system. (109)

Much of the literature would support Hartwell. In the transition from utterance to text (Olson's terms), writing will often be characterized by a mix of oral and print codes. Beginning writers are people who must, because they lack experience, rely on oral rather than written conventions when they write; unlike skilled writers, beginning writers tend to write like they talk (Cayer and Sacks 121). Mina Shaughnessy states that because writing is an extension of speech, it necessarily draws "heavily upon a

writer's competencies as a speaker" (79). However, she also points out that because the beginning writer is simply "unaware of the ways in which writing is different from speaking, he imposes the conditions of speech upon writing" (79). "When open admissions students produce papers that are replete with redundancies, repetitions, alliteration, . . . cliches or stock expressions, they are signaling that they most likely come from a residually oral background" (Farrell 449).

> Inexperienced writers do not have the same option of representing meaning in either spoken or written language that experienced writers possess. For beginning writers, writing must be accomplished through speech, the sound, syntax and sense of everyday spoken language. (Collins and Williamson 24)

Collins states that text written "under the influence of spoken language" will exhibit abbreviated meaning (as if there were a partner in dialogue), incorrect spellings and inappropriate sentence boundaries ("Dialogue" 84). These problems come, not from "dialect interference" but from the entry of speech into writing: "it is not so much the conventions of non-standard English that plague our students' writing as it is the conventions---or at least,

the accepted patterns---of spoken English" (Robert L. Allen 350).

Even some of those who have set out looking for interference from dialect have their doubts. Daniel Hibbs Morrow in his answer to Hartwell's critique of the notion of dialect interference admits that much of the data used to support BAE interference in writing is suspect; much of it, he says, does not contain thorough information regarding the speech habits of the subjects (161). However, it is interesting to note that the data that is available suggests that even though some of the students studied displayed BAE features in their speech, many of the same features did not show up in their writing (161). Perhaps even more interesting is the finding that white, non-BAE speakers made "dialect related errors" (162). In a study of a student named Joseph, a speaker exhibiting BAE features, Marcia Farr and Mary Ann Janda found that "the occurrence of [BAE was] not primarily responsible for Joseph's writing problems" (75).

Farr and Janda conclude that one of the sources of error in Joseph's writing was his "previous experience with writing" in the public schools. More appropriately, it would seem that Joseph's lack of experience may be at the root of many of his writing difficulties: "Joseph may not have had much instruction which called for the meaningful

use of writing or for writing which required more than a sentence at a time" (81). This insight into Joseph's background bears directly on what Hartwell and others have to say about the simple lack of print code experience being at the bottom of many writing inadequacies. If a student like Joseph has little or no experience with either decoding (reading) or encoding (writing) there is nowhere else for him to turn but to what he knows---oral codes. Students like this "can only transcribe their spoken language onto paper, without recourse to the cohesive devices, structural links, and organizational frameworks of written discursive prose" (Hartwell, "Writing" 48).

It would seem, then, that in order for students to make progress as writers they need to begin practicing the print codes and acquiring literacy experience through reading and writing practice (Collins and Williamson 24). If there is a similarity between the way oral and written language is acquired, then it would make sense that someone who is learning to write should be exposed to as much writing from others as possible. Before children learn to speak, they first listen; they are normally deluged with language input. In accordance with this view, Julia S. Falk states that "long exposure to the writing of others prior to the production of one's own writing provides the learner with examples and, ultimately with an understanding of the nature

and the structure of written English" (438). Falk believes reading is essential if one is to learn to write. Furthermore, Hartwell is convinced that "all apparent dialect interference in writing is reading related" ("Dialect" 108). The print code hypothesis assumes that there is a very close relationship between writing ability and reading ability that goes well beyond the traditional notions of that relationship (109).

Hartwell's conclusion is based on a theory developed out of reading research called the "direct access" theory. This hypothesis argues that skilled readers can process print so that they translate it directly into meaning rather than having to translate it first into internal speech (see Scinto 32). In other words, even though written language is at some point dependent on oral language for expression, readers and writers can develop their print code skill to such a degree as to escape the dominance of oral language so that their written language capacities for both encoding and decoding can operate independent of sound. This is born out by recent studies that used Positron Emission Tomography (PET) in order to determine what part of the brain was activated by certain cognitive tasks. When the subject was given prose to read, it appeared that the text was processed in the visual centers of the brain "without being sounded out in the auditory cortex" (Montgomery 60). Poor readers

and writers, on the other hand, are limited by their reliance on the phonology and syntax of their speech (Hartwell, "Dialect" 110). The PET study showed that when the same subject was given unfamiliar words or poetry to read, the text would be processed in the oral-aural centers of the brain (Montgomery 60). If this is true, then, as Hartwell concludes, "developing writers need to escape from sound as soon as possible" ("Dialect" 113).

With this in mind, learning to speak "properly" as a way to enhance the development of writing would seem counterproductive. Certainly there are ways in which speech will positively transfer to the learning of writing, but these will only take a student so far. Phonetics for instance, may give us access to the spelling of some words but it can just as easily lead us into spelling errors. One could pronounce the word "answer" perfectly, but if that person is unfamiliar with the print code for that word, perfect pronunciation will be a hindrance rather than a help. Homophones are another example of how the phonological nature of speech simply does not give the writer sufficient clues as to differences in spellings: "There," "their," and "they're," for example, are words that are frequently used inappropriately (Collins 24). Neither will perfect speech help with paragraphing, and because talking is governed by breathing, it has only limited

efficacy in determining sentence boundaries, or even comma placement (contrary to what some people think). Another important way in which speaking skills have limited positive transfer is in audience analysis. Certainly speakers are used to analyzing their audience. However, much of the relationship a speaker has with an audience is made up of responding to cues that the listener gives. These same cues are not present in text. Therefore, even an experienced speaker who consciously understands and practices audience analysis will be at somewhat of a loss when it comes to communicating to a reader.

The point here is that dialects do not interfere with writing, but speech habits do. Making distinctions between a mythical "Standard English," which is very likely spoken by no one, and non-standard dialects is simply not helpful. It would be better to draw distinctions between "Spoken English" and "Written English." If a standard grammar is important, speech, no matter how "correctly" it is articulated, is simply not the appropriate source of that grammar. Once students learn that they are dealing with two different sets of codes, it will be easier to show them which conventions they are using without demeaning the dialect they use. The goal should be not to "change" their speech as much as to give them access to an ever increasing repertoire of linguistic skills. Students should be made to

understand that different situations and different audiences require different registers in both speech and writing and that academic discourse is a special kind of written register that is more formal, more abstract and more technical. Most already know from their oral experience about the different skills that different registers require.

As Robert F. Allen points out, "We can start with those features of English which are identical in both the written system and the spoken system and can build our teaching around them" (350). There are some ways in which the beginning writer's experience with audience, as a speaker and listener, will benefit him or her as a writer. Speakers are acquainted with the concept of audience and the code switching appropriate for a wide variety of audiences, both formal and informal. The task for the teacher is to first make students aware of the strategies that they have already been using as speakers. Although the concept of audience may not be one that a basic writer is fully conscious of, teachers of Composition should be able to show their students that as speakers they constantly consider audience; it is the teacher's job to make unconscious choices conscious. Once a student does become conscious of the knowledge he or she already possesses with respect to audience, the instructor can begin to point out the similarities and differences between the oral strategies

used by the student, and the strategies necessary to become a successful writer.

Once a student develops a palette of linguistic efficiency to include competence in written codes, he or she can begin to blend the various codes in ways that are appropriate to different communication situations. "Writing increases the ways in which language can be used and adds significantly to the linguistic repertoire" (Chafe and Danielewicz 84). As stated previously, though each one has certain distinctive characteristics, neither spoken or written language is a unified phenomenon. There are many instances in which the distinctions between the two modes become blurred. Sometimes the distinctions are blurred, as in the case of speech intruding into academic prose, because a beginning writer lacks control of the code needed to produce academic discourse. At other times, fiction and political speeches for example, writing will borrow from speech and speech will borrow from writing because it is suitable, even necessary (84). Twain certainly borrowed from speech in creating his narrative in <u>Huck Finn</u> and when Lincoln spoke from a podium, he spoke words that had been written and revised.

Twain could not have written what he did without being familiar with both the informal registers of the river and the written conventions necessary to make it available to

his readers. Neither would Lincoln have been able to carry on sustained political discourse in the form of speeches without the benefit of highly developed writing skills. Academics also, because they are normally proficient in both written and oral codes, will exhibit a wide range of linguistic skills that manifest themselves in a multiplicity of styles and registers. At one extreme is informal conversation, at the other is formal academic prose. In between those two extremes are letters, which are more conversational, and lectures, which are less formal than academic writing but still heavily influenced by it (93). It is interesting to see that among this group of language users, the schemata of written forms are highly influential in all manifestations of language. This is perhaps most easily seen (and heard) in the generally larger array of lexical choice exhibited even in the conversations of academics. Though the fact that speech must be produced at a more rapid pace somewhat constrains the variety of lexical options a given speaker can choose, the exposure to the larger lexicon that accompanies the processing of writing will enlarge lexical options. "There is nothing in the nature of speaking which prevents a speaker from using literary vocabulary, and nothing in the nature of writing which prevents a writer from using colloquial vocabulary" (93). The goal of those concerned with communicating should

be to increase the level of word choice so that it "can be varied in whatever ways speakers and writers find appropriate to their contexts, purposes, and subject matters" (93).

It should, at this point, be evident that the nature of the relationship between oral and written language is truly a complex one. There are ways in which they seem intimately connected, even overlapping, and other ways in which they seem unique and distinct from one another. Written language is dependent on oral language for its initial development and in some ways written language proceeds developmentally in a course similar to speech. In addition, many of the things speakers know will help in their transition from utterance to text. However, it is clear that eventually, if text is to be effectual, the writer must break free from the parameters of oral codes and begin to master the conventions that govern writing. Once writers do master the codes necessary to produce written discourse, they will begin to enlarge their linguistic array so that they have a better chance of communicating more effectively to a wider audience. Understanding the similarities and differences between speech and writing can only make Composition teachers more competent to coach their students. Certainly, if we believe that even though speech and writing share some important qualities but are at the same time essentially

different codes, we will approach our students and their writing differently than if we view writing as merely written down speech.

CHAPTER FOUR

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The profundity of the changes brought about by writing may give us cause to reflect: Is writing a good thing? Should we teach it? Of course there could be a heated debate regarding this issue; Plato certainly took the question seriously. But then, he wrote during a time when the transition from utterance to text was taking place not only in the lives of individuals, but also on a cultural level. He at least feared, and perhaps understood, the revolutionary changes that writing would bring. Today, however, it would seem that these questions are almost moot in most cultural settings. In America at least, literacy reigns. One can not escape its effects. Even the illiterate are affected by the printed word. Today, literacy skills come close to being nothing less than survival skills. Without the ability to read and write, one is shut out from a great number of opportunities. Certainly, in our highly technical world where so much depends on print, there is a correlation between one's language skills and the number of career options one has. And so, in addition to separating knower from known, theory from practice, writer from reader, and being from time, writing also separates the literate from the "illiterate," this time creating classes.

But in addition to simple economic considerations, the ability to read and write opens the mind to the marvelous events, people, and ideas of other times and other places. To allow our students to remain ignorant of the possibilities that accompany the mastery of print codes is to condemn them to an impoverished life both economically and intellectually, and to rob us and our posterity of the contributions that fine minds can make, through the competent use of language, to all the disciplines.

In order to prepare students to communicate effectively, writing teachers need to develop a theoretical base that informs their practice. In addition to a familiarity with language acquisition and language transfer theory, examining the characteristics of oral and written language, and looking at the differences between the two code systems should lead to the formulation of particular and practical pedagogical strategies for leading students from their proficiency in speaking to a proficiency in writing. As we see more and more clearly how the two systems of language production impinge on one another, we should adjust our strategies accordingly. Practice without theory, if there is such a thing, is often chaotic and ineffectual and leads ultimately to frustration on the part of teachers and students alike. It is, therefore, important that we at least attempt to solidify a theoretical

foundation that will work itself out in practical ways in the classroom.

It is important, then, to construct a good model of writing which includes how writing is acquired, how it is produced, how it is processed, and how writing as a language code relates to speech as a language code. If writing proceeds from a different set of codes than speech, we as teachers will require our students to read and to write rather than to practice "standard" speech. If we see writing as a community activity proceeding from interaction with other members of that community, we will attempt to instill that sense of community in our students by encouraging them to not only read published texts, but to also participate in workshops where they read and comment in writing on texts written by their colleagues and in turn have their own texts read and responded to. If we believe that texts are produced by a process, we will encourage our students to participate in every phase of the process from invention to editing. If we think that thoughtfulness is a virtue in writing, we will encourage multiple drafts, teach revision as something more than merely correcting spelling and punctuation errors, and promote the idea that the writing process is recursive, not linear. If we can come to terms with the fact that our students are attempting to move from utterance to text using existing schemata, we will

learn to view their "errors" as the formation and testing of hypotheses rather than simply failures of production. In short, if we believe that both the similarities and differences between the spoken and written word offer us as writers and writing teachers the theoretical keys we need to promote understanding, we will design our pedagogy so that we may teach our students how best to use the characteristics of speech and writing to their advantage in becoming more proficient language acquirers and language users so that they can communicate more effectively to a wider array of audiences.

To begin with, we can, to paraphrase Robert Allen, take those features that are common to both oral and written language and use those features to take our students from what they know to what they do not yet know. In other words, we can take those features of oral language which positively transfer into the written mode and use them to introduce our students to new concepts. For instance, as I have already pointed out, speakers are normally quite adept at audience analysis. It is a concept that they have been dealing with on a daily basis for years. Through discussion of the idea of audience, students can be shown that they already have been selecting language appropriate to each communication task. One does not go before the Queen and say "What it is Liz?" and it would be equally inappropriate

for one to use the formal language of a Harvard scholar when addressing a lover or group of intimate friends (Meyer and Smith 144). This is an important idea, seemingly obvious, but nevertheless I have often seen it received as somewhat of a revelation by students who never really thought about it consciously.

Certainly, much language acquisition and language transfer takes place unconsciously, however human beings will not acquire language without comprehensible input and feedback. We know that input, if it is comprehensible, does alter what has been acquired. It is therefore important to make students consciously aware of the requirements of the code they are attempting to master. They should have reasons for doing what they do with language (Shaughnessy 129). In this way, perhaps, writing is unlike first language acquisition. "Unlike the child, who is surrounded by adult speech and able therefore to check his utterances against theirs, the apprentice writer has more need of a teacher who can explain" (76-77).

For instance, once students begin to think about the needs of certain audiences, it is easy then to explain to them that readers, being another and special kind of audience, demand more detail than a person involved in face to face conversation needs. Discussion of the need to contextualize flows naturally out of this concept. Once

students begin to see what readers need (they themselves are readers) they can begin to correct and actually avoid many of the problems in writing that a speaker's habit of abbreviating discourse creates. In this way new writers can begin moving from their primary language (speech) to the target language (writing).

One type of writing assignment that can be very helpful as a bridge from oral language to written language is the narrative. Often this is an assignment that draws on the life experiences of students that either center around events, people or places. One of the characteristics of speech, as we have discussed, is that it is tied to events and tends to narrativize experience. As a result, speakers generally have a great deal of experience telling stories. It is easy for them to see that in order for a reader to follow a story there needs to be a logical progression from beginning to end that does not leave out any relevant detail. An assignment of this kind does not unnecessarily increase cognitive demands on beginning writers. Generally they will have a multitude of stories from which to choose and need not be distracted from the writing task by having to process new information. If anything, they will have difficulty settling on one story. Once they do, they will begin wrestling with what needs to be said and what needs to be left out. This is an excellent opportunity to respond to

their writing in such a way as to get them to begin understanding both the need to focus and the need to specify. Most students know what it is that makes a good story and what it is that makes a story less than interesting. I have often witnessed students begin to recognize the necessity of increased explicitness once they begin to play with narrative. This kind of assignment is an excellent opportunity to show students that writing is, and must be, more than written down speech. Students need to see that they must write with the reader in mind---they must "write like readers" (Gilbert).

In addition to teaching students these very important skills and concepts, one of the benefits of the narrative exercise is that it is not simply an isolated exercise without relevance to other writing tasks. In the classroom, I find myself referring back to the narrative assignment over and over again as I continue to point out the necessity for detail and clarity. Students soon learn that their skill as narrators carries over into the rest of their writing. Frequently students will begin to use narrative as a way of introducing other kinds of papers and even as a way of supporting some of their arguments in the more advanced exercises in argumentation; once students understand written narrative and have practiced it, it is easy to show them the connection between it and the scenario, a very effective

device in argumentation and a sophisticated skill in thinking. By making these connections and providing input that will allow for schema formation, we can begin to affect the consciousness of our students and prepare them for more difficult and abstract cognitive tasks.

As we have discussed earlier, language acquisition and production proceed from memory and the human need to order experience and to communicate that experience to members of our linguistic communities. In order to develop linguistically, young children need to interact with their environment while they are simultaneously bathed in linguistic input. And then, once they begin to produce language themselves, they need feedback (Moskowitz 50). If these same principles can be applied to the acquisition of writing skills, as is suggested by second language research, then it would seem important to create teaching strategies that will increase our students' print code memory, that will give them feedback when they begin to produce text themselves, and that will instill in them a sense that they are part of a community of writers. If, as Hartwell says, writers need to escape dependence on sound as soon as possible, then young writers need to begin to manipulate print codes from the very beginning of their attempts to master the new code. The narrative exercise can be a good beginning.

Accompanying the production, or encoding, side of the narrative assignment should be the decoding aspect. Reading assignments that present accessible schemata can be used as patterns for student writing. When a carpenter attempts to build a house, he or she refers to blueprints and perhaps an artist's conception of the house to be built. It would do little good for a builder to refer instead to a picture of a boat and blueprints for a model airplane. When we assign readings it is imperative that we give students access to prose that shares many of the features of that which they are trying to produce. It is equally important that students be brought to a point where they can recognize the patterns in the prose that they need to model. It is difficult to imagine that the study of prose that models what is to be produced would not be beneficial to new writers. In short, our goal should be to provide students, through prose models, with a schema to look at that will provide them with the necessary input to improve the language schema they look through.

But a more than superficial reading is required in order for the prose models to be worthwhile. It takes more, even, than a careful reading for meaning. Most readers, if they possess any degree of skill, are used to reading for meaning and pay little attention to structure. It is helpful, then, for the writing teacher to begin to encourage

students to "read like writers" (Gilbert). Student readers need to begin looking at the ways accomplished writers achieve some of the things that they do. They need to begin asking questions like, "Why did the writer choose this word?" "Why did the writer wait until now to tell us this?" "Why did the writer choose to leave this out completely?" "How does the writer describe people, places and things?" Prose models, when approached this way can encourage young writers to begin thinking of themselves as writers. Until they do, they will very likely not take responsibility for their own text.

Prose models can even be used as a vehicle for painlessly (relatively) teaching elements of grammar and punctuation. We can look at the way Hemingway uses quotation marks. We can notice that the end marks are inside the close of a quote. We can see how he manipulates dialogue. We can look at the way a semicolon is used. We can discuss the reasons why he breaks his text into separate paragraphs at a particular place. In short, we can begin to look at grammar as the logic of language in a real language situation instead of treating it as an isolated skill. The necessity, and advantages of this kind of input is immeasurable.

It is important, however, that Composition classes do not become Literature or Grammar classes; students need to

begin producing copious amounts of their own text; they need to practice their new language skills and make mistakes, just like children and second language learners do. This is another necessary step in the process of developing memory that supports literacy. But like children, it is not enough that young writers just produce language, they must have feedback. It is known that a child who hears no language and has no linguistic input learns no language (Moskowitz 50; Fromkin et al 116-117). Young writers also need input and feedback in order to develop the skills necessary to produce intelligible text.

There are several principles which should govern responding to students and their papers. First, feedback should be positive and criticism must be constructive; it does no good to ridicule students. Ridicule or harsh criticism will often do nothing more than raise a student's affective filter and thereby make comprehensible input inaccessible. Feedback should encourage, not discourage students. Encouraging students lowers the affective filter and makes input accessible. Second, feedback should be instructive. "FRAG." written in red in a margin does not do students any good if they do not know how to remedy the problem. It would be better to at least write comments like, "Is there any way you can combine this with the previous sentence?" "AWK." does not tell a student as much

as, "I don't understand what you are trying to tell me here; what did you mean to say?" We should respond like any reader would respond if he or she were given the chance to ask a writer questions about places in the text that do not communicate effectively. We can ask questions about parts of the text that need to be developed: "What color was her dress?" "How old were you?" "Where did this take place?" Questions of this kind call for more detail from the writer and cause young writers to do more of what we want them to do---write. Third, feedback should be given as soon as possible after the instructor receives a piece of writing. It does no good, no matter how perceptive and helpful responses are, to give a student feedback after the quarter is over, or even after the next paper is under way. To allow students to make the same mistakes over and over again, each time being graded down for them, without having had the benefit of feedback is not teaching---it is simply exercising power. Further, it is clear that mistakes are a necessary part in the language acquisition process and must be dealt with patiently and persistently. Lastly, when teachers give feedback they should know that many of the "errors" that are considered such sins among English teachers are often evidence of linguistic progress. Errors in student writing need to be approached as more than infractions of the rules.

As Kroll and Schafer have pointed out, rather than simply marking errors in red it may be a sounder course to ask, "Why does a student make this kind of error" (245)? As we have seen, often errors in text are manifestations of the intrusion of speech into writing. It would seem, then, much more useful and valid to approach these intrusions as evidence of what the student can do rather than what he or she has failed to do. That is, "errors" in written text may actually indicate the presence of strategies that the student has used successfully in speech. Based on that success, the student is forming and testing hypotheses in an attempt to become more proficient with the new written codes (Shaughnessy 79; Bartholomae 257). It is a mistake, then, to assume that a student who produces flawed written text is somehow intellectually inferior. We must, as Shaughnessy points out, "look at these problems in a way that does not ignore the linguistic sophistication of the students" (13). It is perhaps a useful assumption to see the basic writer as inexperienced in the written code while at the same time richly experienced, actually quite adept at the use of grammar, when it comes to oral codes.

Once instructors begin to recognize the intellect behind many writing errors, and once they begin to identify patterns of error, they can begin giving more appropriate and efficient feedback which in turn will assist their

students to acquire and develop their print code skills more quickly. Feedback that encourages students to develop their writing more fully and make their own discoveries will lessen the need for prescriptive responses; surface errors tend to disappear when students participate in the process of writing (Kamusikiri). Further, when responses to student writing are couched in constructive terms, the students will be more likely to feel like they are members of a community rather than inferior objects of wrath. This is important in the effort to head off negative attitudes often associated with writing and in the necessity of keeping students motivated. Again, when affective filters are down, the responses to students can remain accessible to them.

The importance of the role of community in language development can not be underestimated. A linguistic community not only teaches its conventions, and gives linguistic input and feedback to its members, but it also allows language users to exercise their new found linguistic skills. In other words the community is a place to gain experience and to communicate that experience. Composition instructors can make this idea more tangible by constructing a classroom linguistic community in the form of a workshop.

> Because writing is a social act, a kind of synthesis that is reached through the dialectic of discussion, the teaching of writing must often begin with the

> experience of dialogue and end with the experience of real audience, not only of teachers but of peers. (Shaughnessy 83)

The workshop allows students to read one another's papers and respond as readers to each other's text. Even listening to texts being read in the workshop may have benefits, but there is still a need for research that explores the effect on print code acquisition of the oral/aural processing print codes. In the meantime, it would seem that the workshop, whether texts are read silently or aloud, gives each student an additional source of feedback which makes readership seem less artificial than if the teacher is the only one to respond. If done correctly, it should also contribute to the students' sense of membership in the community of writers. The Puente Project, developed and based in Berkeley, and now spreading throughout the rest of California, is one example of a very successful program that uses the workshop extensively in its teaching of writing. Students who once had little chance, or inclination, to graduate from a four year college are now transferring at comparatively high numbers because they have been brought into the community of writers through the workshop model (Ashton).

But running a workshop can be a delicate procedure. The success or failure will depend as much on the way the

workshop is handled by the teacher as on the performance of the students themselves. Understandably, most new writers are reluctant to share their writing. Therefore, it is important from the first day of class that the instructor work very hard to create a non-threatening environment. Students should understand from the beginning that the success of the class depends largely on them and that they are really the center of the classroom. The Composition instructor must abdicate the seat of power so that students can begin to take control of their own texts. It helps to begin sharing very short pieces of writing at first and working toward sharing larger pieces. It can also be helpful to begin by reading some of the work of the students aloud, while the writer remains anonymous, so that the students get used to hearing student work. I have seen this work as a tactic to draw students out so that they eventually begin volunteering to read their own work aloud in class. Also, we should not forget that as writing teachers, we should be writers too. Sharing our own writing with students and participating in the writing exercises we assign will show the students that they are not the only ones required to take risks. They might even see that writing teachers, too, fail to produce acceptable prose without revision. These kinds of activities will help students become more comfortable in the classroom and in the

smaller workshop groups and make them less likely to become stalled in the acquisition process.

When dividing the class into groups, one should pay attention to group dynamics. It may not work to put four very quiet people together or four students together who are struggling. Also, students need to be with other students who will hold them accountable. I have often had to break up cliques and assign the students to different groups in order to make the groups more productive. It is, therefore, important to begin right away assessing students' personalities and language competence so that individuals can be placed in groups that will give both groups and individuals the best chance at success.

Once the students are in their groups, they need to know what to do. Most students are not only uncomfortable having their own work scrutinized, but they are also nervous about the possibility of offending others. Some time should be spent, just before the workshop starts, reassuring the students that they are not expected to be English teachers or editors, but that they need to simply respond like readers to the papers they get. They should be told that they need not give advice as much as ask questions. If they run into a place in the text that trips them up they can simply write in the margin, "I don't understand you here." or "What do you mean?" or "Could you give me more detail?"

These kinds of comments are less threatening to the writer and easier for the reader to make. However, if left undirected, students will often respond with largely superficial positive comments like, "This is neat, I loved my grandmother too." For this reason, students perform best in workshops if they are given parameters within which they can work.

When giving direction, it is best to keep in mind that guidance should not be too invasive. Wandering around the room watching the students like a policeman on a beat may not be productive because the instructor's looming presence can make students uneasy and reluctant to participate. However, a written guide that tells students what to look for will make the student's comments more relevant than if left strictly to themselves. It is important that the guide be assignment specific. That is, it should guide the students in looking for features of the current assignment that are important to its success or failure. For instance, if the assignment is one that requires argumentation, a form can be devised to ask students to identify the paper's thesis statement and to copy it on the form; to identify the issue and to briefly describe the writer's position on that issue; to identify the writer's purpose; to list any counter arguments that they can think of that the writer has not addressed; to list any weak arguments or logical fallacies

that they can identify; to describe the tone of the piece; and to give their overall impression as to whether or not the paper is convincing. A form of this kind serves to give the readers direction as they read and respond, to reinforce to both readers and writers the important features of the assignment, and to give the writers a tangible, focused, and relevant response that they can refer to as they revise their draft. This experience responding to student writing and in turn having their own writing responded to by another student gives young writers the opportunity to interact with text in such a way as to make writing for an audience more real.

Judith Ashton, who teaches writing in the Puente Project at San Bernardino Valley College, states that the Puente Project's writing program uses the workshop at every phase of the writing process from invention to proofreading. According to Ashton, the students soon become comfortable with their writing groups (generally four students to a group) and even begin meeting outside the classroom to further collaborate on their writing. She uses very strict guidelines to guide the responses that the students give to one another and has seen remarkable results. In the several sessions on revision each student reads aloud what they have written to the group and the other students simply write down phrases that they especially like and make a list of

questions about parts of the text that they want to know more about. The writer writes down the questions, but can not respond to them orally. Because the questions usually address some part of the text that needs development, they lead the writer to develop a more explicit text.

But the community need not be limited to the classroom. Following the workshop, students should be encouraged to share their papers with other readers. One of the best places to go for this is the writing center. Unfortunately, however, the word tutor has less than favorable connotations. A visit to the tutor, more often than not, is seen as a remedial experience for students who are failing or at least struggling with their studies. Even instructors are sometimes under the impression that "good students" do not need to see a tutor. It should be the writing instructor's job to change this impression. If community is important in the process of acquiring language, then tutors can be an important part of that community; a tutor is simply a sophisticated reader who is familiar with the conventions of writing. Seeing a tutor is another opportunity for any writer, whether they are writing at the freshman or graduate level, to experience audience first hand.

> The tutor, like the classroom writing teacher, is preeminently a reader whose informed, facilitative

> responses to writers not only provide them with the feedback needed to make more effective choices, but also dramatize for them the nature of writing as a process of making and communicating meaning. (Brannon and Knoblauch 45)

Indeed, while many undergraduates are trying to avoid the "humiliation" of a trip to the writing center, the tutors themselves are exchanging papers and asking one another for responses to their own writing. The writing center should be promoted as just another part of the literate community where students can go to have their work read and responded to in a supportive environment, away from the sometimes imperious presence of the teacher and grammar text (Hartwell, "Writing" 59). Through the use of appropriate instructor feedback, workshops, and visits to the writing center writing instructors should begin to instill in their students not only the conventions, but the values of the writing community. One of the cardinal concepts of the community is writing as a process.

One way that the speech community and the writing community differ is in what they tolerate. It has already been pointed out that listeners will tolerate a great deal in the production of speech. Listeners will allow mispronunciation, false starts, even outright mispeaks, but they will soon grow impatient with a speaker who hesitates

too long before speaking. Most listeners would rather hear babble than silence. Often listeners will fill the silence with their own voices or, if they are somewhat more impatient, they will put words into the mouths of speakers and finish sentences for them. If they are very impatient, and somewhat rude, they might say something like, "Come on. Spit it out, will ya!" In a community of writers, on the other hand, writers are expected to take a great deal of time in the production of their language. At least they should be expected to. There are still those professors and students who expect perfect prose to spill from the pen without hesitation or preparation, but perhaps this is just another example of the intrusion of speech habits into writing. Writers who know the conventions of writing know that writing takes time. It takes time to work through the invention strategies that help writers begin to know what they are going to write. It takes time to revise multiple drafts, return to invention, and revise again. It takes time to edit. And between each and every phase, it takes time to ruminate and consider what has been written so far. It simply takes time invested in the process in order to produce a presentable product. Experienced writers know that there can not be a good product without the process that leads to it.

But neither can there be a process without the aim of producing a product. There can not be one without the other. The phrase that is often used today "product v. process" is a well intentioned attempt to emphasize the importance of the process of writing. However, it can be misunderstood. Some instructors have picked up the notion of "process" and run off the field with it. Process is indispensable; requiring students to produce good writing without teaching them the process involved is tantamount to expecting a Genesis miracle---one does not simply speak good writing into existence. On the other hand an emphasis on process without acknowledging the importance of product is not only deceptive, but it is the very definition of aimlessness. In a way, the relationship between process and product is analogous to second language acquisition; there is the acquisition process but there is also a "target language." Likewise, the writing process must aim at a target---a mature and polished product. The lack of a balanced view of the relationship between process and product can cause writing teachers untold anxiety when the time comes that they actually have to make a judgment based on what a student has written. In addition, an emphasis on process that does not inform the students that they are expected to produce competent text misleads and may actually lull them into state of false security---both need to be

emphasized. One of the beauties of the writing process is that it allows for the production of polished discourse. Students need to realize that participation in the process will give them an infinitely better chance of producing writing that competently communicates, and teachers need to devise grading systems that take into account both participation in the process and the resulting product.

In addition to insisting on process as a principle, writing teachers need to do what they can to facilitate their student's participation in the process; theory must be wedded to practice. The conventions of writing that allow for multiple drafts, revision, and editing and the physical labor that accompanies them imply that writers should avail themselves of whatever technology makes that process easier. The brief time it takes for short term memory to erode implies that writers should use whatever technology they can to ensure that their thoughts are not lost in a deluge of ideas. Word processing has revolutionized the writing process. Students who were reluctant to write more than one handwritten and one typewritten draft because of the physical labor involved, can now easily write many drafts involving radical revisions of the same paper. The reality is that students who are not able to use word processing to write are at a crippling disadvantage to their peers. In addition, the effect of the rapid and felicitous production

of words can not but have a profound effect on cognitive processes. At the very least, word processing facilitates the connecting of ideas and therefore, one would think, the formation of new concepts. It is perhaps arguable that no student should be graduated from a comprehensive writing program who has not first demonstrated some proficiency at the keyboard of a word processor. However, it is unlikely that all of the technology available in the Western Hemisphere will improve a student's writing if the assignments are not meaningful and real.

The dual purpose of language is to order experience and to communicate. This is no less true of written language than oral. If we expect students to take writing seriously then we, as teachers of writing, must be diligent to construct assignments that are meaningful to students both in terms of gaining knowledge and communicating. Students should be guided in such a way that they are encouraged to generate topics that are meaningful to them. Exercises that require students to develop isolated skills seem and are artificial. Ideally writing assignments should deal with real situations. If the instructor must

> recommend topics for writing assignments, the topics must involve subjects about which the students have the background or interest to communicate about a particular topic, to a particular audience, in a

> particular form, and at a length that the student deems appropriate for the situation. (Falk 440)

I would add, that the writing assignments must have a particular purpose. If an assignment calls for the students to propose solutions to a problem or problems, why should they be forced, or even allowed, to write about topics that do not affect them personally? Why have students write about solutions to the exile of the Dali Lama when they are aware of problems that exist where they work. For instance, I had a student who initially wanted to write about solutions to the problem of abortion. Abortion is one of those standard topics that students naturally think of when they confront choosing a topic for a writing assignment. Instead, after interviewing the student and asking some questions about what she did when she was not in school, I learned that she worked in an ice cream store. After discussing some of the problems she faced at work she decided to write a letter to the owner of the store proposing solutions to some of those problems. She wrote several drafts, revised, and actually decided to submit the letter to her boss. The next week, she approached me after class, obviously delighted, and told me that the owner had read her letter and promoted her to manager. There is no way that a simple lecture about the power of writing can compare to experiences like this. Writing should be

approached from a rhetorical perspective that sees language acquisition as occurring holistically and which requires young writers to consider audience and purpose while allowing them to develop and maintain their own voice in their writing.

When writers see a reason for what they are doing, they will be more likely to want to master the print codes that are necessary to communicate what they want to say. By looking closely at the differences between speech and writing, a theoretical framework can be constructed that will relieve teachers of the frustration that accompanies practice without theory and the irrelevant and unhelpful teaching that accompanies such practice. Students too, and we are all really student writers at some level, by comparing and contrasting the requirements of utterance and text, can be brought into a theoretical discourse that will inform their writing and make them better thinkers and communicators. Perhaps only then, will we begin to appreciate what a truly marvelous event it was when echo became artifact.

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