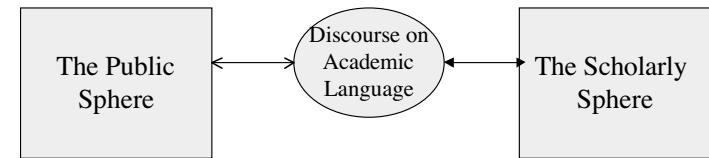


Supporting English Language Learners' Success with Academic Language: What Teachers Need to Know

Guadalupe Valdés
 Inaugural CREATE Conference
 October 1-2, 2007

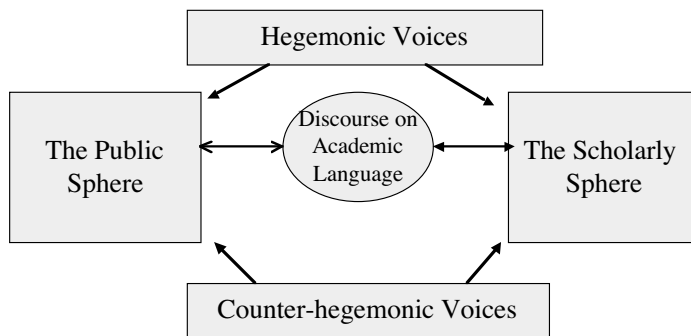
The Scholarly Dialogue on Academic Language

- The Contexts for the Scholarly Dialogue



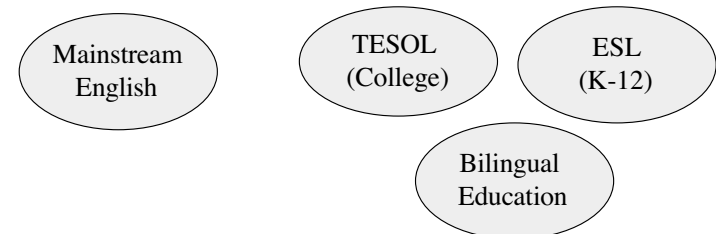
The Ideological Context

Standard English Ideologies English Only Ideologies



The Scholarly Context: Communities of Professional Practice

English as a First Language English as a Second Language



Mainstream
English

Academic discourse:

- is a set of intellectual practices and a way of reading the world,
- involves the presentation of opinions and explicit argumentation in support of opinions,
- follows conventions of explicitness, detachment and appeal to authority,
- is organized to allow appropriate reader interpretation,
- follows stylistic conventions involving grammar and usage, and is error free.

TESOL
(College)

Academic Language:

- is the proficiency required for tertiary study in English and/or
- is the language used within particular disciplines and professions
- follows particular conventions for presenting information specific to the field
- is characterized by particular set of formal features (e.g., sentence length, complex noun and adjective phrases)

ESL
(K-12)

Academic Language:

- is the language needed to succeed academically in all content areas including:
 - the English used to interact in the classroom
 - the English used to obtain, process, construct and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form

Bilingual
Education

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency:

- cognitively and linguistically complex language needed for success in academic settings
- conceptual-linguistic knowledge
- the ability to manipulate and interpret language in cognitively-demanding, context-reduced texts

- How do you do? My name is Duy Nguyen. I am a student in UCI currently on the freshman level. I am going to be attend Biology 5C next year, but during the summer, I would like to continue my study on the subject. Although my major is Social Science, I am consider to have Biology as my second major. I am currently attending Professor Campbell lecture. He suggested to me that maybe I should seek around to for resarch projects, since it would be more beneficial and interesting to have actual hands on experience. He suggest that maybe I should contact you to see would it be possible to provide me with some information. As I have understand that you are currently conducting a research on the subject of plasma, and I would like to know more about it, that is, if I am not costing any inconvenience. Than you very much, and have a good day. (Scarcella, 2003:1)

9

On September 14, 2007, the Mountain View Voice carried the following news story:

Speeding up English learning:

MV Whisman does more for students working with a new language
by Susan Hong

Getting English language learners to learn the new tongue more quickly has been a daunting task for the Mountain View Whisman School District, where English is a second language for 45 percent of students. At last week's board meeting, the district decided educators have to try something new to speed the process...

The California English Language Development Test Progress (CELDT) scores for academic years 2005-06 and 2006-07 are scheduled to be released at the end of this month, but the district already has the results: While MV Whisman passed the state's minimum standards by four percentage points, educators say the district must do better... "We need to do better than that," said Judy Crates, director of English language development, during last week's board meeting. The district "cannot afford" to have students at the same level for two years, she said... Knowledge of English, she said, "affects the access to all subject areas. **We're trying to get students to learn the academic language. Students pick up the playground language.**"

For its 1,900 English language learners, the district has two instructional methods: a new English language development and ongoing SDAIE, which means specially designed academic instruction in English, Crates said. **The new English language development requires teachers who have English language learners to teach 30 minutes of English as though they were teaching a foreign language,** Crates said. **Students go to classes grouped according to their English sufficiency level, and learn form and grammar,** she said. "It means teaching language like we did when we went to school and learned French 2 or French 3. We studied language forms and grammar, how you used the language, how you ask a question, how you read a story," Crates said...

10

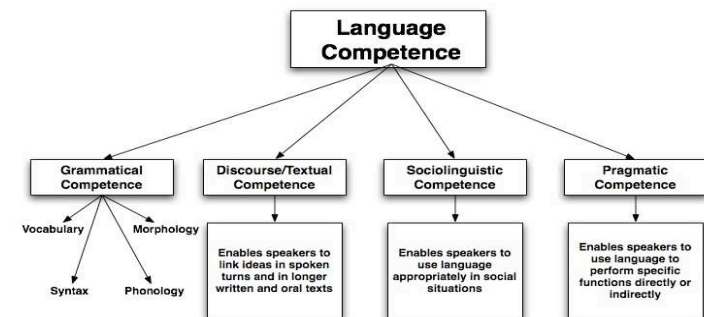
Two approaches to language "teaching"?

(Stern, 1990)

Analytic	Experiential
Focus on grammar	Focus on substantive themes
Study of rules and language items	Engagement in purposeful activities
Practice of language items	Language use is like real talk
Attention to accuracy and error correction	Priority on meaning transfer & fluency
Less attention to social interaction	Social interaction important

11

A holistic view of language competence



Informed by the work of Canale & Swain (1980), Bachman (1990) & Littlewood (2004)

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