



February 2011

www.atesl.ca

President's Message

by Diane Hardy

The start of a new year is one of my favourite times. It encourages reflection on past accomplishments and prompts the question, "What lies ahead?" Although my attention is forward facing, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect upon a salient event in 2010.

One of the highlights that concluded the past year was the ATESL Conference. I was particularly struck by the theme, "Inspiring Voices" - two simple words that encompass one bold challenge to showcase the people, projects and ideas that galvanize inspiration and passion. The conference not only celebrated people who represent the best from within our field, but it also encouraged us to tap into the best of what lies within each of us. Finding inspiration was not a challenge as it is deeply rooted within and outside of our organization, and it was brought to the forefront through the work and dedication of the conference planning committee, volunteers and presenters.

Further, inspiring voices were heard when two ATESL projects were highlighted. The first project is the ATESL Resource Database, accessible through our website, centralizing ESL resources funded and developed in Alberta.

The second project is the development of the Curriculum Framework for Adult ESL in Alberta. This exciting initiative will support adult ESL teaching, learning and assessment and will be formally launched in the fall of 2011.

Finally, the theme of "Inspiring Voices" was punctuated when Jaye Fredrickson was presented with an ATESL Lifetime Membership Award for her significant contributions to our teaching and learning community, and when four practitioners from across Alberta - Margaret Armstrong, Judy Hasinoff, Shelley McConnell and Helen Sommer-Longshore - were presented with the Dawn Seabrook de Vargas Fellowship which recognizes ongoing commitment, innovation and contribution in the field of ESL. Congratulations to the award winners and to everyone who took part in the conference. Your participation ensured that inspirational voices were heard and that their messages will carry forward into the year ahead.

The ATESL Board looks forward to 2011. We wish you all a happy, healthy and inspirational year.

- Diane

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The ATESL Newsletter

is published quarterly.

Deadlines: Feb.15, May 15, Aug.15, Nov.15

Announcements, workshop dates, book reviews, teaching ideas, and articles relevant to the field.

Contact: Irene Wood at atesl.admin@shaw.ca

More information and archives at atesl.ca

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Bursary Reports

Each year in its annual budget the ATESL Board dedicates \$2000 to be awarded in bursaries that year. Up to \$1000 of this is awarded following the March 15th deadline and the remainder is awarded following the September 15th deadline. The bursary committee may award up to \$500 per bursary and any remaining funds are carried forward. If you would like to apply for a bursary for a professional development activity, please consult the ATESL website.

In this newsletter, we are pleased to provide you with the reports of two recent bursary winners, Jane Humen and Amanda Nielsen. Jane attended a train the trainer workshop organized by Lisa Bjerke, the author of *Accent on Canadian English*, and Amanda registered in the course *Critical Perspectives in Cultural Studies*.

MAIS 625 Critical Perspectives in Cultural Studies Patricia Hughes Fuller Sept 2010

Submitted by Amanda Nielsen

This is an excellent course for those new to Cultural Studies or those wanting a more in depth knowledge of Cultural Studies Theory. Unit One of the course was dedicated to understanding what “culture” and “cultural studies” means within this academic discipline. I had initially begun this course with one idea as to what “cultural studies” was and found out very quickly that the academic discipline was different than my understanding. The development of cultural studies as a discipline is relatively new and there were specific “conditions of possibility” that brought this multidisciplinary area of study into being. Unit Two of the course covered the differences between a number of specific terms used within Cultural Studies as a discipline, including “mass” vs. “popular” culture, “culturalism” vs. “structuralism” and “text-centered” vs. “reader/audience-centered” critical approaches. Unit Three encompassed a broad overview of the “field” of cultural studies including Rosenzweig’s “Rise of the Saloon” and Williams’ “Dream World of Mass Consumption” focusing on mass and popular culture to Lorde’s “Age, Race, Class” and McRobbie’s “More! New Sexualities in Girls’ and Women’s Magazines” providing a feminist perspective on cultural studies. Within this unit it became very clear that cultural studies blurs disciplinary boundaries, links culture with notions of identity and that the cultural texts examined and cultural studies practices are inherently political.

The final unit for the course, Unit Four, reflected upon the approaches of the Birmingham School and “cultural studies” emergence as a discipline to the cultural studies of today. The emergence of a focus on ethnicity and gender studies showcased the morphing nature of cultural studies and its ability to assimilate and synthesize new ideas within the discipline.

Though I did do very well in the course I believe that I still have much to learn. There is much more study to be done in the area of cultural

studies and English as a Second Language and was excited to see this as a focus for the next TESL Canada Journal focusing on Popular Culture in TESOL: Identity, Performance, and Reflection. My final paper focused on this topic and only touched the surface of the complexity of the relationship global Englishes have with cultural studies and popular culture.

I would like to thank the board for providing \$500 towards the cost of this course. The content and theory gained provided valuable insight into an area that impacts English as a Second Language instruction on a day to day basis.

“Train the Trainer” workshop with Lisa Bjerke (the author of Accent on Canadian English)

Submitted by Jane Humen

This individual session was held on Friday, December 3. Lisa is a speech-language pathologist with expertise in working with Canadian English accent acquisition for speakers of English as a second language. Her book and CD's are the basis of this pronunciation program; the seminar focused on her application of her techniques of assessment, setting up an effective class curriculum, the importance of the IPA, key consonants and vowels as well as common stress patterns.

We began with the basic premises of ACE:

- that communication is the key component to successful interactions

- to help the individual to become a more confident speaker of English

- that there are variables that affect pronunciation change

age of learning
imitation skills
exposure to English
use of first language
motivation level
training

- that here are sequential training steps: listening, sound, words, sentences, reading aloud then conversation

The following discussion topics ensued:

1. Making speech sounds

- How sound is initiated
- Consonants versus vowels
- Continuous versus stopped sounds
- Voiced versus voiceless sounds

2. The International Phonetic Alphabet

- Since the IPA is the written representation of all sounds

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More conference information at
<http://www.tesl.ca>

- An excellent conference program is emerging, with lots of choices to suit the varied interests of our TESL delegates from across Canada. 102 workshops to choose from over the two days, plus two keynote addresses and a Michael Swan grammar workshop.

- The conference banquet will focus on a relaxed atmosphere with time to socialize and enjoy East Coast food, and East Coast entertainment from Roger Stone. Listen to a sample of his music here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKEiaRVF3NQ>

- Thursday activities include a visit to the famous Pier 21, now the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, and an afternoon tour to Peggy's Cove, Mahone Bay, and hopefully also Lunenburg.

- Saturday evening activities include a visit to the Keith's Historic Brewery and then a lobster dinner and local entertainment.

- Accommodations: The Prince George Hotel, Delta Barrington: Some special rates available until March 28



Jaye Fredrickson: A Change-Maker

by Tracey Derwing

Jaye Fredrickson recently stepped down from her position as VP Academic at NorQuest College. She will be sorely missed, not just by her former colleagues there, but by everyone who worked with Jaye in ATESL.

Jaye is a remarkable person. Her earliest years were spent in an isolated fishing village on the shores of Lake Winnipegosis in Manitoba, the daughter of an Icelandic fishing family. Jaye's mum was a teacher, and she home-schooled Jaye and her siblings in the early grades. Her dad fished, hunted and trapped, which led Jaye to have a fascination with the fur trade, and particularly the intercultural relations between First Nations people and those of European descent. Jaye also had a strong interest in languages, so it made sense that she studied History and German at university, later receiving a Master's in History from the University of Manitoba. Her thesis became a book: Fredrickson, J. & Gibb, S. (1980). *The Covenant chain: Indian ceremonial and trade silver*. Not only did she publish, but she mounted an exhibition at the Museum of Man (now the Museum of Civilization) in Ottawa, and was fêted by Governor General Ed Schreyer and his wife shortly after the opening.

Jaye's curiosity and her love of writing eventually led her into other directions. She worked as a writer and communications director for the Canadian International Grains Institute for three years, and then moved on to Cargill for eight years, where she managed the Canadian Seed Division; this meant she was responsible for planning, policy development, marketing and administration, among many other things. To support her new directions, Jaye obtained an MBA from the University of Manitoba in marketing and public policy. Jaye then became the founding General Manager for Agri-Tec, Canada's strategic alliance of 16 companies specializing in grain handling. She introduced this consortium to markets in China, the Middle East, Russia and Kazakhstan. Then, in 1991, Jaye was hired by Western Economic Diversification in the federal government where she eventually became the Director General of Strategic Initiatives and Planning.

Although she enjoyed her job, Jaye wanted to spend more time at home with her son, Lachlan, so she decided to step back and do some volunteering at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN). Having travelled extensively and having lived in a second language environment herself (she had worked in Germany when she was younger), she knew what it was to be an outsider. She loved working with students, and eventually, because she never does anything half-heartedly, Jaye went back to university. At first she was just going to take Linguistics 101, and then just a few more courses, but she ended up getting her third Master's, this time in TESL at the University of Alberta.

Jaye then returned to the EMCN as the Director of Language Services. Under her leadership, the EMCN introduced community-based ESL programs to several new communities in Edmonton, developed and delivered English in the workplace programming for private sector employers, and developed and operated integrated programs combining language and career training for several occupations, including the engineering technologist program which has been so successful. Jaye also introduced a new ESL curriculum based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

In 2003, Jaye became the Dean of Language Training and Adult Literacy at NorQuest. Little did she know when she was hired that the administration had their eye on her for the Vice President Academic role. Within six months, Jaye moved into that position, where she then stayed until October, 2010. In the short period of time that she was the Dean of Language training, she launched a new ESL program that would allow the college to offer content-specific ESL for different career streams, and she also initiated a strategy to enhance the college's ability to meet the needs of immigrant students in all programs, not just ESL. After those short six months, Jaye became VP Academic, and Anna DeLuca came in as NorQuest's Dean of Language Training and Adult Literacy. These two became the dynamic duo, changing the status quo, not only in the language programs, but throughout the whole college. Concurrent with her new position was Jaye's term as President of ATESL in the year of the organization's 25th anniversary. Jaye made it her mission to celebrate all of the accomplishments of ATESL and the people who made it happen. She also encouraged ongoing collaboration across sectors. This was a period of sea change, when the government began to realize that more immigrants were needed in Alberta.

Both the federal and the provincial governments sought advice from ESL providers and others and the resulting relationships among policy makers, providers, and ATESL itself became even more important.

This was a time where the stars were really aligned. Jaye felt as though all of her academic and work experience came together at this point. Her background in history, and particularly intercultural relations, and her background in business and public policy all served her well; of course, her TESL background was crucial too. Everything that she had done so far gave her the skills to ensure that NorQuest would grow exponentially during this period. Hers was an onerous role as the academic leader of the college, responsible for all programming and all services to students. Jaye instigated many innovative initiatives during this period and she encouraged everyone around her to do the same. She introduced centres for excellence in five strategic priority areas: intercultural education, which many of us are familiar with, learner supports, aboriginal learning, print media technology, and continuing care education. She also expanded diploma and certificate offerings. I could give you a very long list of her accomplishments but suffice it to say, she changed the ethos at NorQuest. The College had always seen itself as primarily an upgrading college, and ESL as just a small branch of that. Jaye, with the help of people in ESL, helped the College to realize that the immigrants in the ESL programs were the college's treasure and that they had to be nurtured in all programs, and that programs had to be respectful of immigrants' lives; thus occupational content and language had to be offered in unison to save years of study.

While Jaye was creating a new philosophy and way of working at NorQuest, (to say nothing of having to do incredibly complicated work with budgets and HR) she still had time for other service commitments, such as serving on the Board of Directors of the EMCN, and the Research Grant Adjudication Committee of the Prairie Metropolis Centre. Jaye has made incalculable contributions to the lives of newcomers, and to the people who work with them.

Jaye is still working for change, but now her goal is to support research on Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's disease. Her hero is Stephen Hawking, who has shown that not only can one live with this disease, but one can continue to make significant contributions to one's community.

On November 5, 2010, Audrey Olson presented Jaye with the ATESL Lifetime Membership Award in recognition of all her accomplishments and her outstanding contributions to our field. Jaye has touched the lives of many; certainly everyone who has worked with her, but also, all the newcomers who have benefited because of her implementation of innovative programming. She is still working for change. If you would like to be a part of Jaye's team, please visit her website <http://www.als.ca/events/mysite.aspx?fid=4655> or Google 'Jaye Fredrickson's Website'.

- Tracey Derwing, University of Alberta

ATESL Mission Statement

The Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) is a professional organization that promotes the highest standards of teaching and English language program provision for all learners in Alberta whose first language is other than English. We do this by:

- encouraging and providing professional development opportunities that are consistent with generally accepted principles of adult learning and with currently understood principles of second language learning and teaching;
- liaising with other organizations, local, provincial, national, and international, engaged in education;
- creating awareness about immigration, settlement of immigrants, and English language learning by communicating with government, business, and the general public;
- encouraging awareness of issues of accountability and program standards by communicating with English language program providers and learners;
- encouraging the highest standards of teacher preparation and performance by administering an ESL teacher accreditation process;
- working collaboratively with government to develop policies and procedures which govern the provision of English language programs and related services for immigrants to Canada;
- encouraging and supporting the participation of learners in the decision-making processes that determine their educational choices.



The Lexical Anatomy of a Novice NNES Undergraduate Essay

by Scott Roy Douglas, PhD

Scott Douglas has taught English as an Additional Language at all levels to both children and adults in the Middle East, Japan, and Canada. His current research interests lie in vocabulary, composition, and the field of English for Academic Purposes.

International students are making up ever larger percentages of undergraduate classes at Canadian universities. However, the first prerequisite for many is the English language proficiency requirement. This could mean finishing an English for Academic Purposes program or completing a language proficiency assessment such as the TOEFL. However, once students have achieved a particular university's English language proficiency requirement, how do they fare in terms of vocabulary use in comparison to their Native English (NS) speaking peers? By taking a case study of one international student's novice academic writing in his first year at the University of Calgary, the lexical anatomy of his writing can be uncovered to reveal the vocabulary breadth and depth of knowledge of a non-native English speaking (NNES) student in relation to a satisfactory NS lexical norm.

The first important piece of the lexical anatomy of a piece of writing is the lexical breadth. Lexical breadth refers to how many words are being used. In the analysis of lexical breadth, two different sets of quantitative measures have been identified by Meara and Bell (2001). Intrinsic measures are those that only use the words appearing in a piece of writing, while extrinsic measures consider additional information, usually in the form of frequency lists.

The intrinsic measure used for this analysis is the Type to Token Ratio (TTR). The TTR is the ratio of the number of different words in a text (the types) and the total running number of words (the tokens). The more varied the vocabulary in a text, the higher the TTR. This provides a measure of the lexical variation in a piece of writing.

The extrinsic measure used for this analysis is that of vocabulary profiling, specifically the Web VP English v3 Classic. Web VP is an online tool available on the Compleat Lexical Tutor website (Cobb, 2010), and it is based on a version of Nation's VocababProfile and RANGE (Heatley & Nation, 1994). The Web VP English v3 Classic quantifies the words being used in a text against the General Service List (GSL) (West, 1953), and the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000). This results in a vocabulary profile that reveals the percentage of text covered by the 2000 most frequent (1k+2k) word families of the GSL, the percentage of text covered by the AWL, and the percentage of text not covered by either the GSL or the AWL (Off-List). In other words, vocabulary profiling uncovers the lexical distribution in a piece of writing, showing how much of the writing is made up of high or low frequency words.

The other important part of the lexical anatomy of a piece of writing, lexical depth, was measured using the Detailed Marking Code for the Effective Writing Test (EFWR, 1993). Lexical depth refers to how well the words are being used in a piece of writing. The case study paper was coded for such errors as the wrong parts of speech, the wrong word, synonym error, invented words, redundancy, inappropriate diction, and spelling errors. Once the case study paper was coded, a Word Error Ratio (WER) was calculated by adding all the instances of word errors found in the case study paper and dividing the total number of errors by the total number of tokens and multiplying by 100. The same was done for the number of spelling errors to create a spelling error ratio (SER).

For this case study, one paper from the University of Calgary's Effective Writing Test (EWT) administered in the 2003/2004 academic year was chosen for analysis and compared to the lexical norms of NS EWT papers that were rated as satisfactory. The case study paper was written by a 26 year old male student whose first language was Chinese and who agreed to allow his EWT paper to be used anonymously for research purposes. The student had been living in Canada for 5 years at the time of writing the EWT, and he had finished his high school studies abroad. His reported TOEFL score on entrance to the University of Calgary was 560 (iBT equivalent = 83), and the case study student was enrolled in his first year in the Faculty of Business. The topic of the student's paper was whether or not he was in favour of development in Canada's mountain parks. The case study student's paper was rated as unsatisfactory by the EWT assessors. This paper was not deemed to be of university level writing competence.

In terms of lexical variation, the student's paper had a TTR of 0.35. This reveals that the paper has less lexical variety than the average TTR of 0.44 for satisfactorily rated NS papers (Douglas, 2010). The student's paper was also 561 words long compared to the average of 494 for satisfactory NS papers (Douglas, 2010).

The case study paper was longer, but it was written with a smaller number of different words than a satisfactory NS paper. This suggests that the case study student did not have as varied a vocabulary at his disposal as his satisfactory NS peers. The greater number of words in the case study paper may be accounted for by the use of compensatory strategies such as circumlocution and repetition. The case study student wrote more words, but those words were repetitious. Having a varied vocabulary is considered a mark of lexical richness (Douglas, 2010), but the case study student does not reach the TTR norms of his satisfactory NS peers. This may account in part for why his paper was rated overall as unsatisfactory by the EWT assessors.

There were also differences in the lexical distribution of the case study paper compared to satisfactory NS papers. 95.90% of the case study paper was written with the 2000 most frequent words in English. This was almost 10% more coverage by high frequency words compared to a satisfactory NS paper measure of 86.40% (Douglas, 2010). There was also a difference in the number of academic words used in the case study paper. Only 2.67% of the case study paper was accounted for by the AWL in contrast to 7.60% on average for satisfactory NS papers (Douglas, 2010). Finally, the case study paper had less Off-List words than a satisfactory NS paper, with 1.43% of the case study paper covered by words neither on the GSL or the AWL, compared to 6.00% coverage for satisfactory NS papers (Douglas, 2010).

From these measures of lexical distribution, it can be seen that the case study student relied more on the first 2000 most frequent words in English, and wasn't able to employ as many academic words as satisfactory NS students. As a result, the case study student was depending on a more general vocabulary made up of high frequency words to express his meaning. This may be because he did not have as many low frequency words at his disposal, or he may have been unwilling to take a risk by using low frequency words that he may not have felt confident using. The ability to tap into low frequency words contributes to the lexical richness of a piece of academic writing (Douglas, 2010), and the case study student's inability to tap into the same number of low frequency lexical choices as his satisfactory NS peers detracts from the lexical richness of the case study paper. This could be another contributing factor to the case study paper not having been rated as satisfactory.

The case study paper also revealed differences in knowledge of lexical depth. In the case study paper, the WER was 2.32. This translated to over 13 vocabulary errors in the paper. This was in contrast to a WER of 0.42 for satisfactory NS papers (Douglas, 2010). There were also more spelling errors in the case study paper (SER=1.07) compared to the satisfactory NS norm (SER=0.53) (Douglas, 2010). All of this pointed to a lower ability to accurately use the vocabulary available to the case study student compared to his satisfactory NS peers. The accurate use of vocabulary contributes to the overall lexical richness of a piece of academic writing (Douglas, 2010). The more lexical error, the less lexically rich a paper may be. These lexical errors are another

in ACE, it is paramount that the trainer become familiar with the symbols.

- During the assessment and in eventual course interactions, the learners become familiar with these graphic characters and are then able to connect them to the target sounds.

3. Assessment

- We examined the ACE assessment kit that enables the trainers to perform a very objective evaluation of the ESL learner's initial and final levels of pronunciation. This includes:

- A stimulus manual
- Word analysis response form
- Response booklet for consonant and vowel/stress and intonation analysis
- Comprehensibility rating scale
- Client pre and post questionnaire
- Pronunciation goals summary form

- I was able to begin to apply some of these techniques by doing a mock assessment, using a digital video recording of one of Lisa's ESL students.

4. Effective instruction

- designing useful activities to teach various concepts
 - i. stress and intonation patterns
 - ii. pitch and intonation
 - iii. the schwa vowel
 - iv. noun-verb stress
 - v. syllable reductions
 - vi. content and function words

I would like to gratefully thank the Board for their generous approval of my application for the \$500 bursary, which allowed me to attend this workshop. The ACE program is very well organized and provides a structured, sequential method to pronunciation instruction and development.

possible reason why the case study paper was not deemed to have reached a satisfactory level of university level writing competence.

By analyzing a NNES student's paper with that of his satisfactory NS peers, vital information is provided to instructors working with international students preparing to go to university. For this case study student, the analysis revealed that he was not only using a more restricted range of vocabulary that included many fewer low frequency words, but the words he did use were also more likely to contain lexical errors. The case study student appeared to use a general and repetitive vocabulary with less control over accuracy of use. By incorporating knowledge of satisfactory NS lexical norms in novice academic writing with English for academic purposes curriculum, educators can guide their students to vocabulary goals that will foster lexically rich academic writing.

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Professional Development Bursaries

Apply for an ATESL professional development bursary.

Deadline March 15

<http://www.atesl.ca/cmsms/membership/bursaries/>