

Heritage Language Literacy: Theory and Practice

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the process of intergenerational language shift from a sociolinguistic perspective and proposes a pedagogical model for expanding the stylistic range of heritage learners, targeting the development of writing proficiency. The model proposes that the curriculum should be organized so that students initially draw on their knowledge of the spoken language. The norms of various written genres are introduced gradually, progressing from less to more formal and more complex discourse types, with an emphasis on text cohesion.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, the number of Americans who speak a language other than English at home grew by 47% (US Census 2000). As a result, foreign language teaching professionals across the country are encountering increasing numbers of heritage learners. There is a general recognition that the needs of heritage learners are different from L2 learners, and a growing body of literature identifies those needs.¹ Yet there is a lack of pedagogical literature proposing effective teaching strategies for heritage language populations, especially strategies that could apply cross-linguistically. This paper attempts to wed practice to theory, proposing a pedagogical approach to heritage language literacy that is based on insights into bilingualism and intergenerational language shift in immigration.

II. HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A DEFINITION

Heritage language learners are born into households where a language other than English is spoken and they are bilingual, "at least to some degree" (Valdés 2000: 375). This widely accepted definition reflects the diversity of the heritage learner population. The recommendations in this article are targeted to heritage learners whose proficiency ranges from English-dominant students with no writing ability in their heritage language to those with some limited writing skills. They do not apply to heritage learners with native proficiency (spoken and written), who seek instruction to maintain their high-level skills.

Despite the diversity of their skill levels, heritage learners all share certain characteristics. First, they are bilingual, and few if any bilinguals are equally competent in two languages in all areas. The notion of a "balanced" bilingual is a popular myth based primarily on theory rather than fact (Romaine 1989: 9; Grosjean 1982: vii; Valdés 2000: 384). Although they are not equally fluent in both languages, however, heritage learners do use two language systems, or at least parts of two language systems. Second, heritage language learners seek out instruction usually because they perceive that their skills in the language of the host country are stronger than those in their heritage

language.² Their language reflects an on-going process of intergenerational language shift from the heritage language to the language of the country of immigration. How language shift is manifested, which skills are reduced and how, depends on a number of factors, including age and education level at immigration, family background, parent's profession, and religion (Zemskaja 2001).³ Although skill levels vary, heritage learners across languages share a lack of familiarity with the full range of stylistic registers available to the educated native speaker. Scholarly literature investigating language loss and shift among Spanish, (Silva Corvalán 1994; Valdés and Geoffrion-Vinci 1998), and Russian (Kagan and Dillon 2001; Zemskaja 2001) immigrants attest to the loss of stylistic registers among heritage learners.

III. REGISTER: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC DEFINITION

Language competence defined from a sociolinguistic perspective extends beyond the Chomskian concept of innate knowledge of grammar rules to include use of language within social contexts. "Communicative competence," a notion introduced by Hymes in 1972, refers to the ability to use language in appropriate social situations using registers or styles, which are socially conditioned forms of oral and written discourse, or "situationally defined varieties of language" (Biber and Finegan 1994: 51). Written discourse is commonly divided into text types or genres (Halliday and Hasan 1989). Register, genre, and style all refer "to language varieties associated with situational uses" (Biber and Finegan 1994: 4). The term style in this discussion is essentially synonymous with register, except that unlike register, style can refer to individual personal variations in language use. Genres are convention-based organization of texts (Ferguson 1994). In this paper the term register is used as a cover term incorporating style and genre, referring to socially conditioned language use.⁴

The definition of communicative competence is based on an understanding that human communication is largely governed by convention (Ferguson 1994). For example, register is based on an understanding among language users that "certain expressions will mean certain things when used in certain combinations under social conditions" (Ferguson 1994: 15). The conventions of social discourse are acquired through interaction with one's surrounding community. Apologies, requests, sermons, and jokes are examples of social discourse, or genres, that require certain patterns of language use. The richness of a speaker's stylistic repertoire is determined by the access a person has to a variety of situations calling for differentiated speech patterns (Finegan and Biber 1994: 337–339). An educated speaker develops an array of formal discourse, including formal speech registers and written genres, to achieve communication goals.

Speakers' selection of registers is influenced by factors including the addressee, the goals of the speaker, the topic, the relationship between the interlocutors, and the "domain," a cover term incorporating topic, situation, and the speakers' communicative goals (Fishman 1964, 1968, 1972). The variety of registers available to a language user is in part a function of the types of communicative situations, or domains, the user regularly encounters. For bilingual speakers in immigration, domain is a key issue.

IV. LANGUAGE SHIFT IN IMMIGRATION: THE BILINGUAL AND REGISTER

According to Fishman (1964, 1968, 1972), bilingual proficiency is shaped in part by the functions each language serves and the domains, or contexts determined by time, place, and role in which each language is used. Domains of language use include family, friendship, religion, employment and education. Bilinguals' language proficiency is rarely the same across all domains of language use. The bilingual typically "develops patterns of dominance or strength, usually in relation to the domains in which the languages are used" (Seliger and Vago 1991: 4). As a result, each language is differentiated functionally and is used in specific domains, and the use of each language is in complementary distribution according to domain. While functional differentiation can occur in any bilingual community, it is particularly salient within the context of immigration.

Among immigrant populations in the United States a pattern of progressive intergenerational language shift is commonly observed. According to models of shift provided by Fishman (1964) and Valdés (2000), first generation immigrants usually learn some English, but their use of it generally remains restricted to domains outside of the home. Gradually use of English and the mother tongue overlap as the use of English expands into new domains. In the next stage of language shift, the languages are used increasingly independently of one another. In the final stage, usually observed in the second or third generation offspring of immigrants, English replaces the mother tongue everywhere except the home. Since knowledge of register is learned from interaction with one's speech community, a narrowing of the stylistic range is a function of the limit of the speaker's activities (Finegan and Biber 1994: 337–339). At the same time, as the linguistic repertoire in English expands to include an increasing number of domains, the home-based language contracts, its functional use restricted to fewer domains, until it is ultimately limited to the home and family domain. A family, homebound language is characterized by a casual, conversational speech style, used with familiar interlocutors to a restricted set of topics focused on everyday life (Dressler 1991:101–102).⁵

The gradual narrowing of registers among heritage speakers partly results from bilinguals' access to more than one language. Where monolinguals switch speech styles in discourse, bilinguals can codeswitch, that is, they switch to another language. A number of sociolinguistic studies indicate that bilinguals use codeswitching at the level of discourse in the same way that monolinguals style shift (Gal 1979: 61; Gumperz 1982: 16).⁶ Codeswitching, like style shifting, is often motivated by the need for more expressive language (Gal 1979: 95). The ability to switch languages allows bilinguals to restrict use of each language to familiar domains. This restriction accounts for the tendency toward the functional differentiation or complementary distribution in spheres of language use among bilinguals.

Language shift is accompanied by a gradual progression of systemic language attrition that extends to morphology, phonology, lexicon, and syntax. The second and third generations of immigrant families often display imperfect learning of language systems. Intergenerational attrition is characterized by borrowing, blending, and interference (Seliger and Vago 1991: 3–14). Research focusing on heritage speakers of Russian tends to bear out Maher's contention (1991) that attrition and shift do not proceed linearly. Zemskaia's (2001) study of three waves of Russian immigrants in three countries indicates that language attrition is preceded by general instability. Before an element of the language system is lost or altered through simplification or blending, the simplified or blended form is often used along with the correct form for some period. As

Gal argues, “language shift arises out of language heterogeneity; it is quantitative before it becomes categorical” (1979: 153). This linguistic insight into the process of language shift in immigration is confirmed by the heterogeneity of skill levels displayed by heritage learners.⁷ Students of seemingly similar backgrounds often display widely different linguistic skill levels.

Curriculum designers of heritage language courses will benefit if they are informed by the insights gained from linguistic research and focus on strategies designed to expand stylistic range. These strategies can be addressed and incorporated into an approach that focuses on the general pedagogical goal of literacy.

V. HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNING: DEVELOPING LITERACY SKILLS

Scholars across disciplines that include linguistics, educational psychology, sociolinguistics, and cultural theory have challenged the definition of literacy as mastery of reading and writing. This traditional skill-based view has been supplanted by a definition of literacy as a social and culturally determined construct (Scribner and Cole 1981; Street 1984, 2000). According to this view, literacy is means more than being able to read and write; it is the ability to use these skills in socially appropriate situations, within appropriate registers, and is acquired in the social situations in which the individual uses language. A fully literate person can therefore use appropriate language forms across a full range of registers.

Literacy involves a familiarity with a range of genres and the conventions that govern each genre. These conventions include the use of language at all levels: lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, and syntactic. For example, a scientific research report is written in a formal style featuring complex syntactic structures (see Section IV below), and typically includes a discussion of previous research and an explanation of the purpose, methods, and results of the study (Paltridge 1997: 70–1). A literate person relies on familiarity with these discourse conventions in reading and writing. Viewed in its widest sense, then, as Kern (2000: 37) observes, literacy is a “cognitive process that involves creating links between our knowledge and textual forms.”

Heritage language instruction seeks to give learners the tools to develop biliteracy. While functional biliteracy cannot be achieved in a one or two-semester heritage language course, much progress can be made in expanding the stylistic range of the home-based language within a standard one-semester course. The key issue for curriculum design is expanding the functional range of the home-based language. We can begin a discussion of this issue by examining some features of discourse types from opposite ends of the stylistic spectrum: unplanned conversational speech and formal written discourse. By understanding some of the differences between these two types of discourse, we can begin to define some of the linguistic tools heritage learners need to expand their writing skills and improve their mastery of formal written discourse.

VI. THE TRANSITION TO BILITERACY: FROM SPOKEN TO WRITTEN DISCOURSE

Biliteracy can be represented as a continuum (Dorian 1981; Hornberger 1994). At one end of the continuum is the idealized educated bilingual, fully literate in both languages, who can use both languages in all possible domains and in all registers; at the

other end are bilinguals whose use of the spoken language is restricted to the home and who have no knowledge of the written language. Heritage language students who can write, but have minimal training, tend to write the way they speak. Beginning writers are initially limited to converting speech into written form.⁸ Curriculum design for heritage populations involves an examination of what distinguishes spoken discourse from written discourse. If the goal of heritage pedagogy is to help students to master more sophisticated writing styles, and eventually developing rhetorical skills, we need to understand the mechanics of spoken and written discourse across languages.

The differences between spoken and written discourse are partly a function of the contrasts between the parameters in which these two modes of communication take place. Speech can take many forms depending on the style of speech and on the intentions of the speaker. For the purposes of comparison with written discourse, this discussion focuses on informal or conversational speech, which is constrained by the parameters of conversation. Informal speech is spontaneous; it comes in spurts and is often highly fragmented (Chafe 1982). Syntactically, conversational speech is paratactic, characterized by a loose stringing together of phrases without connectives. Chafe (1982) observes that spurts of speech occur in intonation units. Each intonation unit expresses an “idea unit.” (37) Chafe observes that spoken language seems constrained by the limits of memory since each intonation unit in informal speech usually expresses no more than one idea at a time (Chafe 1992: 21). Conversational discourse is structured around a main theme or a series of themes, and prosody structures conversation into thematic chunks and highlights important information (Gumperz, Kaltman, and O’Connor 1984: 16).

Moreover, interlocutors in conversation depend on paralinguistic cues, prosody, pauses, gesture, and facial expression to convey and monitor information exchange. Interlocutors also draw on shared knowledge in constructing conversation. Writers, on the other hand, draw on readers’ knowledge of the conventions of genre to convey information. The writer chooses a particular style or genre knowing that the readers’ perception of the text is shaped and informed by the expectations evoked by that genre (Collins and Michaels 1986: 209). While informal speech tends toward fragmentation, writing has a number of devices that make it possible for a writer to add information to an idea unit (Chafe 1982: 39). Written discourse also contains a higher ratio of nominal arguments, and it tends to be morphologically more complex (Givón 1979; Biber 1995).

Based on the characteristics of these two extremes of the literacy continuum, some preliminary conclusions can be made about what heritage language learners require to expand the stylistic range of their home-based language. First, strategies for composing written discourse must be taught (Cook-Gumperz 1986:13). Moreover, heritage learners possess some understanding of written discourse types in English and can draw from their knowledge of English in approaching similar genres in the heritage language. The first step is to develop a metalinguistic awareness of written discourse types and genres, bearing in mind that the stylistic norms for genres in the heritage language may be significantly different from those in English. Once heritage students learn to identify the linguistic conventions of specific genres and text types in the heritage language, they are ready to attempt to actively produce targeted text types.

The linguistic tools required to produce various types of written texts include at minimum a basic familiarity with morphological and orthographic rules of the heritage language. Mastery of grammar and spelling, however, is not enough for gaining literacy.

The conventions of written discourse styles must be taught. A key issue, particularly for heritage students at the lower end of the literacy spectrum, is discourse cohesion. Since informal spoken discourse is characterized by a loose stringing together of phrases, those with little background in writing and, typically, limited reading skills, do not have an intuitive grasp of complex sentence structure in the home-based language. They need to develop strategies for linking ideas in syntactically more complex sentences. In addition to learning the conventions of punctuation and syntax, they must expand their lexical repertoire to include rhetorical organizers, in the form of complementizers, logical connectors, and temporal markers that are used to organize the discourse structure to mark semantic relationships between clauses. Rhetorical organizers and sentence adverbials are crucial tools for fashioning intersentential cohesion in written discourse (Collins and Michaels 1986). Students can draw from their knowledge of English discourse in approaching the issue of text coherence, but they need to be taught syntactic and lexical devices for marking intersentential semantic relations such as contrast and juxtaposition in the heritage language.

The pedagogical model presented below in Section VII is designed to provide heritage language learners the tools to expand their written stylistic repertoire. The model is based on a multi-stage process that can be adapted for heritage learners at different levels.

VII. LITERACY INSTRUCTION: A PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

The model presented in Figure 1 is based on the premise that the primary goal of heritage language courses should be to develop literacy skills by expanding familiarity with genres of written discourse.⁹ The model is based on the need to provide students with explicit instruction in strategies for constructing varieties of written discourse. Introductory comments about the model are followed by an explanation of the process of instruction and a discussion of each stage of instruction.

STAGES	STAGE I	STAGE II		STAGE III		STAGE IV
WRITING MODES	CONVERSATION	DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE	EVALUATION	EXPLANATION	ARGUMENT
PROCESSES	composing written forms of conversational discourse	describe	sequencing in time and space; recount	expressing opinions	sequencing: causal relationships; explain	persuading readers to accept a point of view; interpretation
DISCOURSE TYPES	dialogue, interior monologue	descriptions: object, landscape, people	narratives: personal family histories, stories, fairy tales	evaluations: reviews, critiques	explanations: news articles, summaries, reports	essays, academic papers
TARGET TOPICS	orthography, punctuation	adjectives, intersentential cohesion	verbal morphology, intersentential cohesion	intersentential cohesion: linking words, set phrases	passive voice, intersentential cohesion	subordination, intersentential cohesion

Figure 1

The top row in Figure 1 presents the units of the curriculum plan in chronological order by Stages I through IV. Each stage is focused on a “writing mode,” an umbrella term referring to six basic text types: conversation, description, narrative, evaluation, explanation, and argument. These modes were selected because they are broad basic categories characterizing most written forms. “Processes” refer to the functions of each text type. A conversation is a written form of spoken discourse; a description describes; a narrative recounts events, locating them in time and space; an evaluation expresses opinions; an explanation typically features cause and effect relationships; and an argument persuades. “Discourse types” are subtypes of genre, or types of texts that fit into the definition of each writing mode. For example, conversation in written form could appear either as an internal monologue or a dialogue. Similarly, critiques and reviews are types of written evaluations. Each list of discourse types is not exhaustive; instead, a few representative genres have been selected for inclusion.

An important principle underlying the model is that the function of discourse determines its structure (Kern 2000). Each discourse type features specific linguistic features. A narration, for example, typically contains verbs that establish a sequence of events. Descriptions of concrete objects often include adjectives. “Target topics” in Figure 1 list linguistic features common to each discourse type that can be incorporated into each unit of instruction. For example, since descriptions tend to contain adjectives, the unit on description lends itself to a study of adjectival morphology. Some linguistic structures are characteristic of specific text types across languages; the target topics

presented in figure 1 represent an attempt to incorporate grammatical structures that appear in each text type cross-linguistically. The connection of form and content in texts becomes important in a cross-cultural context, such as in heritage language instruction, since the structure of certain text types or genres may vary from language to language.

The stages in Figure 1 are sequenced so that students begin with simpler, less formal conversational discourse and then progress, gradually mastering increasingly sophisticated and formal genres. The final stage targets formal academic prose with rhetorical goals. Each stage is framed by a set of preliminary written texts assigned for reading and analysis. The readings feature the types of discourse targeted in that stage. Students are asked to examine the form as well as the content of the text. While interlocutors in conversational speech rely on external cues and shared information to negotiate meaning, literate language users draw on their knowledge of the conventions of genre in written texts to infer the author's intent. Students therefore need to develop a metalinguistic awareness of the tools writers use to construct discourse in the heritage language. Reading assignments with questions designed to lead students to targeted features of each genre help students develop an awareness of the linguistic forms present in each discourse and how they are used. This inquiry into the connection between form and function in texts is an important precursor to actual writing assignments. Reading assignments can be augmented with exercises for vocabulary development, which can target derivational morphology, pointing out productive roots, prefixes, and suffixes of words from the reading, or they can focus on word meanings. Grammar and orthography can be integrated into the first phase of each stage, preferably before actual writing assignments. At this juncture students can also be challenged to confront the issue of discourse coherence. Syntactic and lexical devices for presenting contrast, topic focus, and for organizing the elements of a rhetorical argument typifying high style formal prose can also be pointed out and discussed.

The second phase of each stage consists of writing assignments, which can be structured according to the instructor's preferences. For example, group writing assignments allow students to work together and develop more confidence in their skills. Students with stronger skills, when paired with those with weaker skills, can point out problem areas and introduce new strategies. Diaries and other forms of autobiographical writing encourage self-expression and experimentation. Each writing assignment can be preceded by a reading and discussion of a similar discourse type. These readings provide crucial models for construction of the target discourse. Writing assignments can require a number of drafts, challenging students to review and improve their texts. The final phase of each stage typically consists of a writing assignment that students complete independently, incorporating knowledge gained from discussions of the readings and group writing assignments.

VIII. THE PEDAGOGICAL MODEL: STAGES I-IV

Stage I of the model is designed to introduce students with little or no writing proficiency to written discourse. Beginning writers become acquainted with basic orthographic and grammatical rules in this stage. Students are introduced to the written form of spoken discourse that is familiar, at least in its verbal form, and they are assigned to compose dialogues or interior monologues.

In the first part of Stage II students are introduced to descriptions and adjectival morphology. This is a good point to introduce the notion of coherence in written discourse. Discussions of intersentential links and paragraph structure become increasingly important as texts types with complex syntax are introduced. Students gradually develop a repertoire of intersentential connectors. The second part of stage II focuses on narratives, featuring temporal or causal sequencing. Discourse types targeted in this stage include autobiographical accounts, such as family histories, and stories or tales. Discussions of verb morphology in this stage include verbal strategies for sequencing and foregrounding and backgrounding.

Stage III is organized around two discourse types: evaluations and explanations. In this stage students are introduced to rhetorical strategies for written discourse. In the first part of Stage III, students learn strategies for expressing opinions. In the second part, they focus on explaining causal relations as they learn how to write reports. Reading assignments can include news articles, summaries, and reports. Discussions about discourse construction feature more complex structures such as passive voice and subordination.

Stage IV features formal academic discourse, the most complex written form lexically and syntactically. Cross-linguistically sentences in more formal written discourse tend to be longer and syntactically more complex and to feature subordination (Biber 1995). In this stage students are challenged to draw on the discourse strategies they developed in preceding stages to produce texts with a rhetorical aim, such as to persuade or argue a point of view. If the stylistic norms for academic prose are significantly different from those in the students' dominant language, then this stage will include the stylistic requirements of academic discourse in the target language.

The model presented in Figure 1 is intended to be a flexible strategy providing general guidelines targeted to the development of written literacy. The order and content of the stages can be adapted to suit the needs of learners, and the model can be adjusted to better suit specific languages. Particular types of discourse styles may contain linguistic constructions that are difficult for the heritage learner, and may require more time and attention. Discourse types or genres deemed more relevant to the target language can be substituted. The target topics provided in Figure 1 can also be altered to address the needs of students. Areas of language structure particularly vulnerable to attrition in the target language can be included in the curriculum plan and may take more instruction time. The model can be adapted for use with more advanced students by omitting the first or second stages.

The flexible strategy may be integrated into a broader curriculum design. For example, each stage of the model provided in Figure 1 could be structured around a content-based topic or a series of topics. Stages I and II can be designed to focus on family history. In Stage I students might interview a relative, perhaps a first generation immigrant, and write a transcript of the interview. Stage II could feature descriptions of relatives. The strategies presented in Figure 1 for the expansion of stylistic repertoire could also be supplemented with a parallel set of units devoted to spoken discourse. Sample writing assignments for each stage of the model curriculum plan are introduced in Table 1 (see Appendix).

IX. CONCLUSION

The proposed model provides a flexible strategy for developing literacy skills. The model is designed to help heritage language students acquire metalinguistic awareness of written discourse types and to apply this awareness to the construction of text types. Students are exposed to models of targeted discourse types and, through analysis and discussion of texts, they progressively gain insights into the construction of specific genres and text types. Students apply their understanding of the link between form and function in texts and they develop the skills to produce more complex written texts. Focusing on expanding the written stylistic range, this pedagogical strategy for heritage courses is designed to give students tools for expressing themselves effectively in writing and strengthening their overall grasp of the heritage language.

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NOTES

¹ See Kondo-Brown (2003) for a general review of literature identifying the needs of heritage language students.

² This conclusion is based on data collected from surveys conducted with Russian language heritage language students at Brandeis University from 2000–2004.

³ See also Fishman 1966 and 1991; Romaine 1989: 40–46.

⁴ See Biber in Biber and Finegan 1994: 31–53 for a discussion of the definitions of style, register, dialect, and genre. Note that Biber also uses register as a cover term for style, register, and genre (32).

⁵ Dorian (1994) refutes the notion that a dying language displays a tendency towards monostylism. In her assessment of the stylistic range of speakers of a dying language—the East Sutherland dialect of Scottish Gaelic—she observes that speakers retain “useful range of styles.” (220) Yet she notes that their range is limited. The issue of monostylism is complicated by lack of an accepted definition of the term “style.” My main point—that lack of exposure to functional domains leads to contraction of the stylistic repertoire—is not controversial.

⁶ I am distinguishing between codeswitching at the level of individual lexical items and codeswitching at the level of discourse, also referred to as intersentential codeswitching. Here I am referring to the latter.

⁷ This conclusion about the heterogeneity of skill levels is based on surveys conducted among Russian heritage language students at Brandeis University from 2000–2004.

⁸ By definition, students at the bottom end of the writing proficiency scale have had little or no exposure to writing styles. As a result, in the earliest stages of literacy acquisition they are limited to informal written styles. This observation is based on work with Russian heritage language learners at Brandeis who have had no previous writing experience.

⁹ Figure 1 takes as its point of departure the genre approach to literacy teaching used in Australia and Great Britain based on Halliday’s systematic functional linguistics (Hasan and Williams 1996; B. Cope B. and M. Kalantzis 1993). The fundamental premise of genre literacy movement, that genres are social processes and that the language used in genres reflects their social function, is one that I advocate here. Genre literacy curriculum plans are organized around detailed linguistic definitions of subgenres. The approach presented here is a flexible teaching strategy with more broadly defined categories of text types.

APPENDIX

Table 1 Sample Assignments

Stage I: Conversation

- 1) informal letter writing: Write a letter to a relative (a native speaker of the target language) explaining that you have enrolled in this course. Tell them about your first impressions about the course and your goals.
- 2) interior monologue: (based on a short reading): Compose an interior monologue for one of the characters.
- 3) dialogue: This assignment is based on Nabokov's short story "The Bell," featuring a meeting between a son and mother who had not seen each other for many years. The students read only part of the story describing how the son seeks out the mother. They read up to the point at which the meeting takes place. Students are asked to compose a dialogue in which the mother and son meet.

Stage II: Part 1 – Description

- 1) description of an object: Riddles describing objects can be used in preparation for this assignment. Students describe an object without naming it. Texts are read aloud in class. Students try to guess what object is described.
- 2) description of a person: Part I: Students in groups brainstorm vocabulary that they would use to describe a person featured in a portrait or film clip. They organize the vocabulary into categories and draft an outline for a description.

description of a person: Part II: Students describe a close friend or relative.
- 3) description of a landscape: Part I: Students describe their favorite landscape, conveying the emotions or feelings that the scene evokes.

Stage II: Part 2 – Narration

- 1) write a family history
- 2) write a fairy tale

Stage III: Part 1 – Evaluation

- 1) review of a film or performance

Stage III: Part 2 – Explanation

- 1) a summary of news reports: The summary focuses on a social or cultural issue, explaining causes.
- 2) an explanation of specific cultural practices (for example, courtship and marriage): The comparison features factors, historical and/or social, that have influenced these practices.

Stage IV: Argue

- 1) research paper: The research topic is formulated in the form of a single question. Students are encouraged to draw information from a variety of sources that will expose them to different text types in researching their topic.