Teaching Language for academic purposes through activation of familiar genres

Professor Yael Ziv
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Date: Thursday 3rd November 2011
Time: 12.00 – 13.00 pm

Venue: Education 418, The University of Sydney

This talk will present the results of an empirical study which reflects the attempt to facilitate an academic text in a foreign language by raising the awareness of the students to its resemblance to other genres. In the study, students of Education in three teachers' colleges were made aware of the similarity between the fable, a cross culturally familiar genre, and the academic text in English, via so-called- "demystification" of the scholastic material. Three different populations were studied (secular Jews, orthodox Jews and Arabs) and despite the significant improvements of the performance in deciphering academic texts following the "demystification lessons" throughout, the results reveal interesting cultural differences. These will be discussed.

Yael Ziv received her PhD in Linguistics from the University of Illinois and has been teaching courses in pragmatic theory, discourse analysis, information structure and the syntax-discourse interface with respect to specific syntactic structures in English and Hebrew at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem since 1976 in the departments of Linguistics and English. She has served as Chair of the English Department and as Academic head of the Unit for the Instruction of Hebrew at the Rothberg International School at Hebrew University for several years. She has also been a member of Teachers' colleges' committees designing programs for the training of foreign language teachers.

Her primary research area is discourse and pragmatics, with specific interests in Relevance Theory, information structure, discourse markers, centering theory and attentional state, generics, conditionals, existentials and the discourse characterization of Spoken Hebrew. Also within her academic interests are the instruction and acquisition of a foreign language with particular reference to English and Hebrew. Included are theoretical questions pertaining to the teaching orientations and objectives as well as practical issues concerning teaching materials and assessments.

Enquiry: Dr Aek Phakiti (aek.phakiti@sydney.edu.au). This is a free seminar and there is no need to RSVP.
We are here (Education 418)→

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