

NEW WRITING COURSES AT QUEEN'S

The previous academic year at Queen's University, Kingston saw the successful introduction of two new courses in technical writing mainly for engineering and science students.

A first-year course entitled "Prose Structures in Everyday English Use" follows the text of a book shortly to be available by the instructor, Dr. Michael P. Jordan. The course enables students to study the structures and styles of many forms of English use including news reporting, professional writing, and both serious and entertaining articles. Although this course provides a sound basis for the students to improve their own writing abilities, the main aim is to develop in the student an articulable awareness of the structures and linguistic signalling of English texts.

A second-year course in "Basic Communication", also given by Professor Jordan, is a series of formal lectures on the basic elements of efficient writing which, he explains, need little detailed explanation and even less intellectual thought. The topics dealt with are thus the generalities and folklore of technical communication which can be taught at little expense, and learned quickly by the students. Such subjects are: planning and outlining, definition, general communication concepts, word use, punctuation, grammatical errors, illustrations, conciseness and concepts of style. Students on this course are achieving a level of understanding of these concepts comparable to students who have taken a course costing 15 times as much.

Michael Jordan also established the principal course at Queen's several years ago, "Effective Technical Writing", which teaches the more advanced concepts explained in his research publications. The essence of the following article was presented at the Applied Linguistics Research Working Group Spring Colloquium at York University last April.

CO-ASSOCIATIVE COHESION IN ENGLISH TEXTS A PROGRESS REPORT ON RESEARCH INTO THE SYSTEMS OF LEXICAL COHESION IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH USE

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BACKGROUND AND AIMS

"The moment two sentences are placed together as members of the same paragraph, they enter into a semantic relation with each other whether we like it or not." (Winter 1978, P69/90)

This statement can be seen as the philosophical starting point of detailed research into "clause relations", which studies the many relations that exist between clauses and sentences. Winter's major work in clause relations (1978) not only discusses the more obvious relations conveyed by sentence adjuncts and subordinators, but also explains in detail relations dealing with compatibility and comparison. Of relevance to this paper is his analysis of comparative denial (what is true of X is not true of Y) and comparative affirmation (what is true of X is also true of Y) as major features of the matching relation. This paper will show the compatibility of this analysis with more recent work dealing with inter-clause connection created by lexical repetition and related devices.

Another branch of study centered around Winter's work (1976) is known as "information structures" or "prose structures". This study deals with the types of high-priority information found in texts, typical patterns for such information, and the linguistic signals that indicate the types of information and show transition between them. Although this work has received considerable attention (e.g. Hoey 1979, 1981, and 1983; Fries 1982, and Jordan 1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982b and 1983), much more analysis needs to be done. The introduction of old or obvious solutions to a problem into a text is a communicative need that is shown to fit the general pattern of continuity described in this paper.