

# A Cognitive Meta-Linguistic Approach to Teaching L2 Learners Reading and Writing Skills

Huỳnh Anh Tuấn\*

*Science and Technology Office, VNU University of Languages and International Studies,  
Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Received 12 January 2014

Revised 18 June 2014; Accepted 27 June 2014

**Abstract:** This paper discusses a cognitive meta-linguistic approach to the teaching of reading and writing skills to L2 learners of intermediate level and above. This approach involves knowledge of English information structure being explicitly given to L2 learners on the assumption that the learners can use it for their skill development. Three issues need to be addressed concerning the application of this approach in language teaching: the adoption of Bachman (1990)'s framework of communicative language ability in terms of its pedagogical implications in the field of language teaching and testing; the position of information structure knowledge and its relationship with skill development in communicative language ability; and the necessity of giving L2 learners meta-knowledge of English information structure in developing their skills. Also presented in the paper are the specifications of the approach including its theoretical models, teaching principles, targeted knowledge and skills, and classroom tasks and activities. The teaching approach can be applied in many kinds of English language teaching institutions in Vietnam and in some other Asian countries. Discussions about empirical research that justifies the applicability of the approach does not fall within the scope of this paper.

*Keywords:* Cognitive, meta-linguistic, information structure, skills development, communicative language ability.

## 1. Introduction

The aim of the cognitive meta-linguistic approach to the teaching of reading and writing skills to L2 learners of intermediate level and above is to develop learners' communicative language ability by first enhancing their meta-knowledge of information structure so as to

improve their reading and writing skills. The approach involves the selection of features of English information structure that could be beneficial to the enhancement of learners' meta-knowledge in the field as an initial step towards their reading and writing skill development. In this approach, which is both knowledge-oriented and skill-oriented, knowledge of information structure is to be explicitly given to learners on the assumption that they can use it for their skill development. In order to achieve

---

\*Tel.: 84-902229101

Email: huynhanhtuan@vnu.edu.vn

that aim, care should be taken to take into the following considerations:

- Selecting a theoretical framework of communicative language ability that is most relevant to the particular aims of the course;
- Positioning information structure meta-knowledge in that framework; and
- Ensuring the interaction between knowledge of information structure and other components as well as the interaction between knowledge and skills within the framework.

## 2. Bachman (1990)'s theoretical framework of communicative language ability

In the field of language teaching and testing, one highly influential model concerning the measurement of L2 learners' communicative knowledge and skill is Bachman (1990) [1]'s framework of communicative language ability. Although the framework was first established to serve the purpose of language testing, its pedagogical implications are extremely rich and powerful. In this paper, the framework is discussed in terms of its definition and components to locate the position of information structure knowledge in this frame. Bachman and Palmer (1996) [2] is also mentioned to clarify what was left unclear in Bachman (1990) [1] and to introduce some of their changes and additions to the first framework.

Bachman (1990:84) [1] defined communicative language ability as follows:

Communicative language ability (CLA) can be described as consisting of both knowledge, or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use.

'Knowledge' and 'competence', according to Bachman (1990:108) [1], are synonymous and 'ability' includes both knowledge or competence and the capability for implementing that competence in language use.' Furthermore, such activities as listening, speaking, reading, writing, producing, interpreting, receiving, understanding, and comprehending, etc, are subsumed under 'use' or 'perform', which are also synonymous referring to the execution of abilities.

The three components of communicative language ability described in the framework are: *language competence*, *strategic competence* and *psycho-physiological competence*.

*Language competence* is subdivided into organizational competence and pragmatic competence. *Organizational competence* consists of two subcomponents: grammatical competence and textual competence. *Pragmatic competence* is further subdivided into illocutionary competence and socio-linguistic competence.

*Grammatical competence* includes knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/graphology involved in language use, as described by Widdowson (1978) [3]. *Textual competence* includes knowledge of conventions for *cohesion* and *rhetorical organization* of text. The conventions might cover rules of combining utterances or sentences together to form a unified spoken or written text. *Cohesion* comprises ways of explicitly marking semantic relationships and conventions such as those governing the ordering of old and new information in discourse. Cohesive devices include those described by Halliday and Hasan (1976) [4] such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion.

*Rhetorical organization competence* (reabeled as rhetorical or conventional organization competence in Bachman and Palmer, 1996) [2] includes knowledge of conventions of textual development such as narration, description, comparison, and classification, etc. The knowledge might involve how to distribute information in a paragraph or an essay of some kind. In an expository essay, for example, the knowledge involves conventions of ordering information in a paragraph: topic sentence followed by primary and secondary supporting sentences with illustrations, exemplifications, statistics, etc.

*Illocutionary competence* (reabeled as functional knowledge in Bachman and Palmer, 1996) [2] encompasses *knowledge of speech acts* and *language functions*. There is some overlap of these two concepts in the model. *Knowledge of speech acts* as described in Austin (1962) [5] or Searle (1969) [6] is the knowledge of the distinction between form and function in language use. In the theory of speech acts introduced by those two authors, an utterance may perform different functions such as assertion, warning, or request and a function may be expressed in different formal forms such as an imperative or a declarative. Description of language functions in the model adopts Halliday (1973 [7], 1976 [8]). *Knowledge of language functions* includes knowledge of how to use language to express, present, or exchange information (ideational functions), to affect the world around us by

getting things done or by manipulating others to get their help for example (manipulative functions), to extend our knowledge of the world by such acts as teaching and learning (heuristic functions), as well as knowledge of how to create or extend our environment for humorous or esthetic by, for example, telling jokes and creating metaphors, (imaginative functions). Bachman (1990:94) [1] pointed out that naturally, a language user often performs several language functions at the same time over several connected utterances and ‘it is the connections among these functions that provide coherence to discourse’.

*Socio-linguistic competence* is the knowledge of how to use language to react sensitively and appropriately to different socio-cultural contexts of language use constrained by variations in dialect or variety (language conventions belonging to different geographical regions or social groups), register (language conventions in a single dialect or variety), naturalness (language conventions of speakers native to the culture of a particular dialect or variety), cultural references (referential meanings connoted in the lexicon of a language), and figures of speech (metaphorical meanings attached to the literal meanings of such figurative expressions as simile, metaphor, or hyperboles).

The table below summarizes the language competence component in Bachman (1990) [1]’s framework of communicative language ability.

*Language competence component in Bachman (1990) [1]’s framework of communicative language ability*

Language Competence			
<i>Organizational Competence</i>		<i>Pragmatic Competence</i>	
<i>Grammatical Competence</i>	<i>Textual Competence</i>	<i>Illocutionary Competence</i>	<i>Socio-linguistic Competence</i>

Vocabulary	Cohesion	Ideational functions	Sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety
Morphology	Rhetorical organization	Manipulative functions	Sensitivity to differences in register
Syntax		Heuristic functions	Sensitivity to naturalness
Phonology		Imaginative functions	Ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech
Graphology			

As we can see, coherence is not explicitly mentioned in the framework, but subsumed under rhetorical organization competence (knowledge of conventions of textual development methods) and illocutionary competence (when language users know how to perform several language functions simultaneously in several connected utterances in discourse). From the perspective of building up a cognitive meta-linguistic approach to teaching L2 learners reading and writing skills, this is not the best way to treat coherence in the model. As coherence is an important concept and closely related to cohesion in discourse, knowledge of coherence should stand on its own and be subsumed in the same division with cohesion under textual competence.

The other two components in the framework are strategic competence and psycho-physiological mechanisms.

*Strategic competence*, (re-conceptualized as ‘a set of meta-cognitive components, or strategies’ in Bachman and Palmer, 1996:70) [2], is the knowledge of how best to achieve a communicative goal. This knowledge includes the assessment of a particular situation based on which a plan of language use is formulated and executed.

*Psycho-physiological mechanisms* refer to the knowledge of how to employ different channels (visual or auditory) and modes (productive or receptive) of language use.

The pivotal and central component in the framework is strategic competence because it

provides ‘the means for relating language competencies to features of the context of situation in which language use takes place and to the language user’s knowledge structures’ (Bachman, 1990:84) [1]. The two factors that encompass language users’ communicative language ability mentioned here are language user’s knowledge structures and context of situation of language use.

*Language user’s knowledge structures* refer to their socio-cultural knowledge or ‘real world’ knowledge. The importance of real world knowledge in the framework is more clearly stated in Bachman and Palmer (1996) [2] in which the term is relabeled as ‘topical knowledge’ or ‘knowledge schemata’. Language users’ topical knowledge in communicative language use is necessarily considered in the framework because it ‘provides the information base that enables them to use language with reference to the world in which they live, and hence is involved in all language use’ (p.65). The authors’ pedagogical and testing implication of considering language users’ world knowledge is that a text richly encoded with specific cultural information might be more difficult for learners who do not have that relevant cultural knowledge.

*Language use* is defined by Bachman and Palmer (1996:61) [2] as ‘the creation or interpretation of intended meanings in discourse by an individual, or as the dynamic and interactive negotiation of intended meanings between two or more individuals in a particular

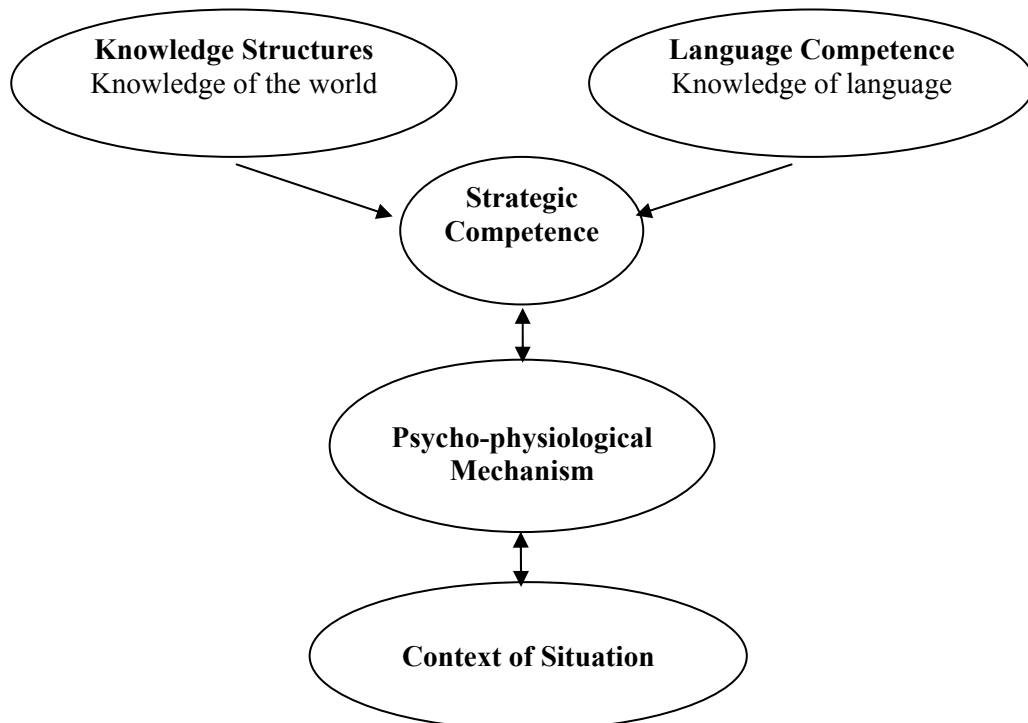
situation.’ The basic concept of language use according to the authors is the interactions between characteristics of individual language users and the characteristics of the language use situation. Affective (non-cognitive) factors including language users’ individual characteristics that might affect their language use are introduced into the updated (1996) [2] framework.

In summary, in this framework, language users’ process of communication can be described as follows. Language users resort to their strategic competence to set up a goal and a plan for their language communication. To achieve this goal, they use their language knowledge as well as knowledge of the real world to engage in communication taking into

consideration the most appropriate channel and mode of language use to employ. What and how they communicate to achieve their communicative goal is constrained by the context of situation in which they have to negotiate with other interlocutors who like themselves bring into the communication all their own individual characteristics. We can see that there exists the role of conscious meta-linguistic knowledge in these processes although Bachman and Palmer did not explicitly mention it while introducing and discussing the model.

The figure below illustrates the interactions of communicative language ability components with language use context of situation and language user’s knowledge structures.

Components of communicative language ability in communicative language use (Bachman, 1990:85) [1]



### 3. Information structure competence and language skills in Bachman's model

Information structure competence is part of textual competence including cohesion and rhetorical organization competence. More specifically, sentential-level issues of information structure can be seen as part of cohesion, and knowledge of clause relations and genre knowledge can be seen as part of rhetorical organization. Illocutionary competence is seen as supportive in bringing about knowledge of coherence of text organization.

Information structure competence is viewed as consisting of knowledge of the following:

- The rules governing the ordering of the information distributed in the sentence;
- The given-new status of the information exchanged;
- The contextual constraints by which the given-new status is defined;
- The devices used to signal this status;
- Clause relations and related issues (textual segments, textual patterns, cohesion, and coherence); and
- Genre analysis (knowledge of the difference between conventions of different text-types)

More detailed discussions on English information structure at sentential and discourse levels can be found in Tuan (2013a [9]; Tuan 2013b [10]).

L2 learners are expected to develop their reading and writing skills after being given explicit instruction enhancing their knowledge of these aspects of information structure.

The relationship between knowledge of information structure and reading/writing skill

development can be elaborated as follows. In Bachman (1990) [1]'s model, learners' reading and writing are viewed as the implementing or executing of language communicative knowledge in communicative language use. Bachman and Palmer (1996:75-76) [2] gave a clearer concept of skill, which is 'a specific combination of language ability and task characteristics'. The authors consider language skills 'to be the contextualized realization of the ability to use language in the performance of specific language use tasks.' Thus, learners' development in reading and writing skills can be viewed as their development in performing a given specific reading or writing task.

The process of L2 learners' skill development in relation to their information structure competence follows the following steps. First, learners are given explicit instruction enhancing their knowledge of information structure. Then, they are supposed use this knowledge in performing reading and writing tasks, through which they might develop their reading and writing skills.

### 4. Teaching information structure to L2 learners for communicative language ability development

In this section of the paper, an explanation is offered concerning why and how giving L2 learners explicit instruction enhancing their meta-knowledge of English information structure might improve their reading and writing skills, and ultimately their communicative language ability.

In the first place, it is worthwhile to discuss the necessity for teaching information structure to L2 learners to enhance their communicative language ability. L2 learners are assumed to

encounter some problems and difficulties in their L2 reading and writing as the result of not having a clear and systematic understanding of information structure and also as the consequence of their L2 reading and writing strategies, some of which are believed to transfer from their L1. The problems are mentioned in previous studies by such authors as Canagarajah (2002) [11], Silva (1993) [12], Johns (1990) [13], Meyer (1977) [14], Singer (1984) [15] and Hinds (1987) [16]. L2 learners' reading problems include their difficulty in recognizing the main idea of a text, and struggling with non-canonical constructions. Their strategies might be setting no goal for reading, and overlooking the significance of cohesive devices. Writing problems, strategies and tendencies encompass not stating or unclearly stating thesis statements and topic sentences, developing ideas illogically, 'beating about the bush' (indirectness in introducing the topic, diverting from the main idea), lack of coherence, concluding without explicitly answering the previously raised question, inadequately using transitional signals, lack of planning for writing at, paying too much attention to local constructions and forgetting the global aspects of the text such as its communicative purposes or its social functions. Of course, it is undeniable that such reading and writing problems as well as lack of effective reading and writing strategies can be grounded in students' low levels of grammatical and lexical of L2. Students cannot process a text normally unless they recognize most of its vocabulary or it becomes very difficult for them to attend to more strategic aspects of composition if they are struggling with basic grammar and vocabulary.

It can be argued that learners can overcome their problems by their own learning strategies,

such as self-study and naturalistic exposure. However, they are not submerged in a native-speaking environment, which means that they are not actually exposed to aspects of information structure imbedded in every day language use. With a cognitive meta-linguistic teaching method, they can accumulate knowledge of information structure in a more systematic and panoramic way. They are also instructed in how to use this knowledge to develop their reading and writing skills. Suggestions to overcome their problems and develop their skills are also given. Of course, there is more to skill development than just teaching, and most importantly, it is the learners who can actively promote their own learning process from the initial step of cognitively inputting language items, making them part of their inter-language competence, activating it in actual use and sharpening their skills. In other words, the learners themselves are part of the transferring process from competence to skills and this process can be positively impacted by language teachers who can apply some effective method to give an impetus to the process.

Most communicative language teaching theorists have always seen some place for the development of meta-language such as Bialystok (1982) [17], Widdowson (1990) [18], and McCarthy and Carter (1994) [19] who propose an integration of meta-language and communicative language learning and teaching. Widdowson (1990) [18] claims that conscious learning, which might involve comparing features of L1 and L2, would suit some learners' cognitive style and enhance their learning. Bialystok (1982:97) [17] asserts that some 'uses of a language involved in reading, writing, lecturing, explaining depend on greater analysis in linguistic structure.' In this view of language teaching and learning there is an

integration of explicit and implicit language learning, of conscious and unconscious learning, of declarative and procedural knowledge, of form-focused and meaning-focused learning, of learning as a product and learning as a process, and of accuracy and fluency, etc (McCarthy and Carter, 1994) [19].

## **5. The interference of L1 strategies in comprehending and constructing information in L2 learners' reading and writing**

### *5.1. Major differences in information structure between English and Vietnamese*

In this section some major differences between English and Vietnamese information structure are discussed in relation to L2 learners' reading and writing problems. It is our assumption that these differences might cause difficulties or confusion in L2 learners' reading and writing in the English language. The assumption of potential interference is made partially from our experience as a second language learner and instructor. In our experience, although many utterances made by Vietnamese learners of English (and in fact, by many other L2 learners) are grammatically correct, not all of which sound natural in terms of their information structure at both sentential and discourse level.

Several considerations need to be taken into account concerning our assumption that differences in language and culture might lead to L2 learners' difficulty in L2 acquisition. Firstly, difference and difficulty are not identical concepts (Littlewood, 1984) [20]. In other words, not all differences cause difficulty. On the other hand, some differences might help rather than interfere with learners' language

acquisition (Mohan and Lo, 1985) [21]. Moreover, acknowledging that linguistic and cultural differences might cause problems and difficulty, other factors involving learners' general development should not be ignored. Learners might overcome their problems when they reach a higher level of development in composition (Mohan and Lo, 1985) [21]. Secondly, learners' individuality should also be considered as important in the sense that there are differences in writing characteristics between them and any conclusion made about one group of learners as a whole should allow variation in the group (Spack, 1997) [22]. Thirdly, differences in language and culture should be equally treated so that English should not be seen as superior to other languages (Kubota, 1999 [23]; Spack, 1997 [22]). What can be inferred from Kubota (1999) [23] and Spack (1997) [22] is that the idea of Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) should be to see what can be done to help L2 learners overcome difficulty presumably caused by linguistic and cultural differences and not to put them in a disadvantageous stance by compelling them to strictly conform to English native writing standard and causing them to lose their own cultural and linguistic identities and idiosyncrasies.

Based on our learning and teaching experience, the following differences might lead to L2 learners' problems in terms of structuring information in language communication: word order differences due to the difference in typological features of the two languages and the differences in writing styles concerning strategies of constructing information in the two languages, i.e., directness in English and indirectness in Vietnamese. The discussions in the section will be made part of our lessons designed to enhance



L2 learners' understanding of English information structure. The discussions are used for pedagogical purposes rather than as a research approach. Learners' awareness of the differences in our opinions can to some extent help L2 learners overcome their reading and writing problems related to meta-knowledge of information structure.

### 5.1.1. Typological difference

Li and Thompson (1976) [24] divided languages into four types according to their subject-predicate or topic-comment relations. Of interest here are the subject-prominent and topic-prominent types. The distinction between a subject-prominent language and a topic-prominent language, according to Li and Thompson is as follows:

In subject-prominent (Sp) languages, the structure of sentences favors a description in which the grammatical relation subject-predicate plays a major role; in topic-prominent (Tp) languages, the basic structure of sentences favors a description in which the grammatical relation topic-comment plays a major role.

(Li and Thompson, 1976:459) [24]

English is widely acknowledged as a subject-prominent language, whereas whether Vietnamese is a topic-prominent language or subject-prominent is still open to debate. This is because of the fact that Vietnamese sentences include both topic-prominent type and subject-prominent type. In principle, the topic-prominent structure is used when the topic has been evoked (or is thought to have been evoked by the speaker) in prior discourse. Sentences with the grammatical subject coming first, i.e. the non-topicalized versions, are utilized when, for example, it is the speaker who initiates the topic. Traditionally, Vietnamese was acknowledged as a subject-prominent type.

However, recently, Vietnamese has been typologically described as a topic-prominent language by such authors as Thompson (1987) [25], Duffield (2007) [26], Hao (1991) [27], Giap (2000) [28], Con (2008) [29] and others. The view is strongly founded on empirical data analysis by Hao (1991) [27] and Con (2008) [29]. Hao (1991) [27]'s data analysis revealed that up to 70% of Vietnamese sentences bear the topic-prominent type and only 30% of them are subject-prominent. The percentage of topic-prominent type sentences in Vietnamese is even higher in Con (2008) [29], fluctuating between 75% and 86%. Due to this dual existence of both subject-prominent and topic-prominent sentences in the language, some of these researchers, e.g. Con (2008) [29] have suggested an approach to analyzing Vietnamese sentences in which both the subject-predicate distinction and topic-comment distinction are applied. Con's suggestion, in my view, seems to be more appropriate because it highlights the differences between subject-predicate and theme/rheme perspectives in viewing Vietnamese sentences and clauses, and thus helps us to a great extent in helping our learners understand Vietnamese sentences and how to best analyze them.

There are two important points concerning this typological feature of the Vietnamese language that I would like to bring into discussion. First, it is my assumption that the topic-prominent feature of the Vietnamese language may be transferred into L2 learners' reading and writing in the English language. In reading, for example, as the majority of Vietnamese sentences begin with a topic followed by a comment, they might get into difficulty in realizing the main idea in English sentences typically beginning with a grammatical subject. In writing, some

Vietnamese learners of English might produce topic-comment sentences in English which might sound clumsy and not very comprehensible to some native readers such as ‘Not only robots, we can find the application of automated technology in some other devices such as rockets or airplane without pilots’ (learner’s writing in a writing test).

#### 5.1.2. *Directness in English and indirectness in Vietnamese writing style*

English academic writers tend to be direct in expressing ideas whereas writers of some Asian languages like Japanese, Chinese, and Thai tend to be more indirect in their writing style (Connor, 1996 [30]; Kaplan, 1966[31]/1987[32]; Hinds, 1990 [33]; and Clyne, 1994 [34]). The difference might be due to the fact that Asian writers are not so writer-responsible as native English writers (Hinds, 1987 [35]). Kaplan (1966) [31]’s analysis of the organization of paragraphs in ESL student essays showed that ‘essays written in Oriental languages use an indirect approach and come to the point only at the end’ (cited in Connor, 1996:15 [30]). Indirectness in the writing style of English learners from these language backgrounds is shown across their whole essay including introducing and developing the main topic, and in the conclusion. Hinds (1990:98) [33], mentioned the ‘delayed introduction of purpose’ in many Asian L2 learners’ introduction paragraphs. Cam (1991:43) [36] referred to a popular discourse strategy of most Vietnamese speakers called ‘rao truoc, don sau’, an approximate equivalent of the English ‘beat about the bush’. Giap (2000) [28] claimed that in the Vietnamese language sometimes people do not mean what they say and the reason is they would like to guarantee the following: politeness, humbleness, modesty, tolerance, courtesy, and sympathy.

#### 5.2. *The interference of L1 strategies in comprehending and constructing information in L2 learners’ reading and writing*

Some major differences in information structure between English and Vietnamese might cause problems to L2 learners in their reading and writing. To be more specific, some L2 learners’ reading and writing strategies formed in their L1 might negatively influence their L2 skill development.

Transfer of written discourse strategies has drawn the attention of contrastive rhetoric, the study of the similarities and differences in written discourse between two languages and how these similarities and differences may affect the way learners express themselves in the L2. While the approach has been subjected to criticism e.g. by Kachru (2005) [37]; Kachru (2000) [38]; Mohan & Lo (1985) [21]; and Scollon (1997) [39], it has been advocated by many others, e.g. Clyne (1987) [40]; Connor (1996) [30]; Hinds (1987) [35]; Mauranen (1993) [41]; Ventola (1992 [42], 1996 [43]). Grabe & Kaplan (1996:109) [44] explained the pedagogic rationale for contrastive rhetoric as follows:

What is clear is that there are rhetorical differences in the written discourses of various languages, and that those differences need to be brought to consciousness before a writer can begin to understand what he or she must do in order to write in a more native-like manner (or in a manner that is more acceptable to native speakers of the target language).

Our cognitive meta-linguistic approach to teaching L2 learners reading and writing is expected to enhance not only learners’ meta-knowledge of English information structure but also their awareness of the differences in information structure between the English and

Vietnamese languages. The awareness is hoped to help them recognize how their L1 reading and writing strategies can interfere with their L2 skill development. Once recognizing the interference, learners can make attempts to develop alternative strategies.

## 6. Cognitive meta-linguistic approach to teaching reading and writing skills

Two cognitive models of language learning and teaching are adopted for our cognitive meta-linguistic approach to teaching reading and writing skills: Anderson (1983 [45]; 1985 [46]; 1990 [47]; 1995 [48])'s Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT)\* model, and Johnson (1996) [49]'s DECPRO model in which learners are expected to have some declarative knowledge of information structure before they can proceduralize it in reading and writing activities. Anderson's (1983 [45]; 1985 [46]; 1990 [47]; 1995 [48]) Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) theory of cognition is mentioned as the theoretical background for Johnson's model. The two models serve as the base for explanations how giving L2 learners explicit instruction enhancing their knowledge of information structure might develop their reading and writing skills. Teaching principles set up are grounded in the two models are cognitive meta-linguistic in perspective. Classroom activities used in the method are designed based on suggestions made by authors of the clause-relational approach to text-analysis such as McCarthy (1991) [50] and McCarthy and Carter (1994) [19]. Although those authors did not offer complete guidance on this, their ideas of using meta-knowledge of such aspects as clause relations and textual patterns in helping L2 learners develop their

reading skill have given insightful implications in building up the activities.

### 6.1. Targeted knowledge and skills

The teaching approach aims at developing L2 learners' communicative language ability as understood in Bachman's (1990) [1] model in which ability is viewed as consisting of both explicit/analyzed knowledge and the implementing of this knowledge in language use. The knowledge learners are expected to have concerns English information structure; the skills are reading and writing.

The selection of information structure meta-knowledge is based on our assumption of what is essential in helping L2 learners understand more about the constructing of academic written texts, which then will help them in their reading and writing. Based on our discussions on sentential and discourse level English information structure (Tuan, 2013a [9]; Tuan, 2013b [10]), we have designed 4 units, each consisting of two or three lessons. Depending on the content load of the lessons, some lessons are divided into two parts. Following are the title of each unit and lesson. The contents of each lesson, the lesson plans including the meta-linguistic exercises following the meta-linguistic lessons, as well as the activities in the skill development phase are all based on our discussions about English information structure and drawn from principles of cognitive meta-linguistic approaches.

Unit 1: Sentential level issues of English information structure

*Lesson 1:* The given/new status of the information exchanged

*Part 1:* Introduction of information structure

In this part of lesson 1, learners are introduced to the concept of information structure, and how meta-knowledge of information structure might help them develop their reading and writing skills, and communicative language ability.

*Part 2:* The given/new status distinction and the contextual constraints on the given/new status

In this part of the lesson, learners are provided with the concepts of given and new status of information in the sentence and related issues. The concepts of theme/rheme and the distinction between theme/rheme and givenness/newness are then presented to help learners understand more about the distribution of the new and the given in a specific contextualised sentence in relation to the theme/rheme framework. Learners are also supposed to realize the importance of context in assigning the given/new status of information. Related issues such as shared knowledge between interlocutors, prior discourse, and cataphoric links are also provided to help learners understand more about the dependency of the given/new status of information in a sentence on the context in which it occurs.

*Lesson 2:* The order in which information is distributed in the sentence

This lesson falls into 2 parts.

*Part 1:* Information distributing principles and tendencies

In this part of the lesson, learners are given introduction into the principles and tendencies of distributing information in the sentence: the principles of end-weight, communicative dynamism, and non-canonical constructions. Knowledge in this part and lesson 1 is a background for learners' exploration into the given/new distribution in canonical and non-

canonical constructions presented in part 2 of this lesson.

*Part 2:* Canonical constructions (7 major clause types) and non-canonical constructions

In this part of the lesson, learners are introduced to the canonical constructions (the 7 major clause types) as well as the con-canonical constructions in English. Presumably, some learners have previously been introduced to some or all of the patterns and constructions. However, it is believed that knowledge of the issue has not been given to them systematically. This part of the lesson is therefore intended to help them systemize their meta-knowledge of clause structures and non-canonical constructions. Within the introduction of the 7 clause structures, learners are supposed to explore the unmarked ordering of information distribution with the pronominal subject bearing old information and the other clause elements (verb, object, complement, and adverbial) bearing the new. Marked ordering is presented within the non-canonical constructions with both their syntactical and pragmatic features explained. In our anticipation this part of the lesson would be more challenging to learners presumably because most of them are not familiar with the constructions particularly in terms of their pragmatic implications. Although they may have known the syntactical features of one or more of the constructions, they may have rarely been taught about the underlying reasons why a particular construction rather than another is used in a specific context. For instance, learners might have been instructed how to invert an element of a sentence but not all of them have been given explanations why such an inverted sentence would be more acceptable in a given context.

Unit 2: Discourse-level issues of information structure

In unit 2, learners are introduced to discourse level issues of information structure: clause relations and related issues such as relational types (logical sequence and matching relations), textual segments, and textual patterns. They are also given instruction concerning the rhetorical features of academic writing from genre analysis perspective.

The unit is divided into 3 lessons:

*Lesson 1:* Clause relations and types of clause relations

Learners are expected to grasp the concept of clause relations and types of clause relations to assist them in approaching their reading and writing from a global view of text. Knowledge of clause relations is expected to draw learners' attention to the need to interpret the relations of clauses in comprehending and constructing text at discourse level.

*Lesson 2:* Textual patterns

The concept of textual patterns and five most common patterns are introduced to learners in the hope that this knowledge will help them visualize the whole logical structure of text in reading and writing. Learners could use this knowledge to recognize the pattern of a reading passage or select an appropriate pattern for an essay.

*Lesson 3:* Rhetorical features of academic texts from genre analysis perspective

Knowledge of the rhetorical features of academic texts from genre analysis perspective is intended to assist learners in constructing their academic writing.

Unit 3: A comparison of English and Vietnamese information structure

The content of this unit is based on our discussions on the major differences in some aspects of English and Vietnamese information

structure. The unit aims at developing L2 learners' writing skill rather than their reading skill. The two issues selected to be introduced to the students are: 1) the topic-prominent feature of the Vietnamese language and the subject-prominent feature of the English language, and 2) the directness in the writing style of English native speakers and indirectness in the writing style of Vietnamese people. The selection depends on our assumption that these two features are most likely to be transferred from their mother tongue into English.

*Lesson 1:* Topic-prominent and subject-prominent languages

In this lesson, learners' awareness is drawn towards the fact that Vietnamese is a topic-prominent language whereas English is a subject-prominent language. Our aim in giving learners this knowledge is to raise their awareness of avoiding creating infelicitous topic-prominent sentences in English writing.

*Lesson 2:* Directness in English and indirectness in Vietnamese writing style

In this lesson, learners are explicitly informed of the expected directness in English academic writing as a warning against their use of indirectness in L2 writing.

Unit 4: Incorporating meta-knowledge of English information structure into L2 reading and writing strategies

*Lesson 1:* L2 learners' problems in reading and writing

In this lesson, learners have the chance to discuss the problems they might encounter in reading and writing in relation to their meta-knowledge of English information structure. Learners will be then advised on how to incorporate knowledge of English information structure they have gained in previous lessons

into their reading and writing skill development.

*Lesson 2: Suggestions for L2 learners' development of reading and writing skills*

Following on lesson 1, in this lesson, learners are given suggestions for the development of their reading and writing skills. The suggestions are made based on some problems and strategies that might negatively affect their L2 reading and writing on the one hand and on what is considered as good L2 reading and writing practice on the other hand. All the suggestions draw on learners' meta-knowledge of information structure.

## 6.2. Teaching approach

Our teaching is cognitive meta-linguistic in approach, adopting Anderson's (1983 [45]; 1985 [46]; 1990 [47]; 1995 [48]) Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT\*) model, and Johnson's (1996) [49] DECPRO model.

### 6.2.1. Anderson's ACT\* model

In Anderson's ACT\*'s theory, knowledge required and processed for cognitive activities like problem solving is viewed as of two kinds: declarative and procedural. Declarative knowledge is 'knowledge about facts and things'; procedural knowledge refers to 'knowledge about how to perform various cognitive activities' (Anderson, 1995:236) [48]. Also according to Anderson (1995) [48], declarative knowledge is explicit, i.e., we are consciously aware of it, whereas procedural knowledge is often implicit, i.e. it is stored in our memory without our being consciously aware of it. Learning in this model is complete only when declarative knowledge becomes procedural, i.e., when learners move from the stage of 'know that' into the stage of 'know how.' Practice is seen as the means for

declarative knowledge to be proceduralized. Learners' process of acquiring a skill in Anderson's view, undergoes three stages:

a cognitive stage, in which a description of the procedure is learned, an associative stage, in which a method for performing the skill is worked out and an autonomous stage, in which the skill becomes more and more rapid and automatic. (Anderson, 1985:232) [46]

In the light of the ACT\*'s model, learners' expected development in reading and writing skills as the result of the cognitive meta-linguistic method can be described as follows: First, learners are given explicit formal instruction enhancing their declarative knowledge of information structure. Then learners are instructed in how to use this knowledge in reading and writing activities. Through practice, their skills which are initially supported by this knowledge become proceduralized, resulting in their reading and writing more efficiently and fluently without their consciously resorting to the declarative knowledge.

### 6.2.2. Johnson's (1996) DECPRO model

Based on Anderson's theory, Johnson (1996) [49] proposed two models of language learning and teaching: PRODEC and DECPRO. Johnson (1996:104) [49] pointed out the differences between the PRODEC and DECPRO models as follows.

In the DECPRO sequence, declarative knowledge has the role of being 'a starting point for proceduralization', and needs to be 'simple, uncluttered, concrete, and easily convertible into a 'plan for action'. In case of our teaching method, in this sequence, learners are given meta-knowledge of information structure, and will then store the knowledge in their memory as a database in 'the form of a set

of semantic networks' (Johnson, 1996:82) [49]. When engaged in reading and writing activities in which learners are required to perform a certain task, part of the knowledge stored in their memory is triggered and retrieved to support them in performing the task. For example, in the reading activity following the meta-linguistic lesson on textual patterns, learners resort to their knowledge of textual patterns introduced to them previously to find out the pattern of a given text to help them grasp the main idea of the text.

In the PRODEC sequence, procedural knowledge is the initial point for declarative knowledge development. In this sequence, learners do not need explicit formal meta-knowledge of information structure to perform a reading and writing task, for example, to get the main idea of a passage. Knowledge of how to grasp the main idea of the passage is imbedded in procedures for task performance.

The DECPRO sequence, in our view, is more relevant to L2 learners, who do not have sufficient opportunities to acquire initial procedural knowledge in a naturalistic way. It can be argued that not all declarative knowledge comes through conscious study. However, with respect to the teaching of information structure knowledge, our hypothesis in adopting this approach is that giving L2 learners explicit instruction enhancing their declarative knowledge is beneficial because such knowledge does not come unconsciously to learners in non-native speaking environment.

### 6.3. Teaching materials

The content of the meta-linguistic lessons used for the meta-linguistic phase is designed based on our discussions about English

information structure (Tuan, 2013a [9]; Tuan, 2013b [10]). Meta-linguistic exercises are designed based on activities suggested by Crombie (1985a [51]); Crombie (1985b [52]). Some exercises can be taken from Quirk (1972) [53]. Writing topics and reading passages used for the skill-developing phase are selected based on learners' interest and motivation in their major study and extracted from various sources including electronic texts. Writing and reading tasks and activities are designed based on suggestions made by clause relational approach authors like McCarthy (1991) [50], and McCarthy & Carter (1994) [19].

### 6.4. Teaching principles

The following principles reflect the cognitive meta-linguistic approach adopted for our teaching approach. They are established on the basis of Anderson's ACT\* model, and Johnson's DECPRO model. They involve both teachers' and learners' activities.

Explicit formal instruction in introducing meta-knowledge of information structure to learners is advocated

The teaching should help enhance learners' both meta-language and skills involving recognizing and understanding English information structure. Therefore, explicit explanations of English information structure are strongly approved of both in the meta-linguistic phase and the skill-developing phase.

- *Learners' engagement in cognitive process*

Learners should be engaged in cognitive processes while attempting to understand meta-linguistic aspects of English information structure both in the meta-linguistic phase and in the course of a reading or writing task. These cognitive processes might involve the learners

exploring features of English information structure such as the distribution of the given and the new in a sentence or the textual pattern of a whole text.

*- A balance between the meta-knowledge phase and skill-developing phase*

The amount of time allocated to the teaching of information structure and to the development of writing and reading skill should be kept in balance. In order to guarantee this balance, it is advisable to simplify the meta-knowledge introduced to learners in the cognitive stage. The amount of time for learners' cognitive activities, the number of questions asked by the teacher, etc, must be carefully weighed to ensure balance of all the activities. It is suggested that this balance should be observed in all lessons.

*- Knowledge-oriented activities followed by skill-oriented activities*

This sequence should be applied in every lesson to conform to our acknowledgement in the role of declarative knowledge in proceduralization.

*- Teachers' assisting in learners' cognitive process*

Teachers are encouraged to help learners with any difficulty they might encounter while cognitively struggling with many aspects of English information structure both in expanding their meta-language and improving their skills. Teachers can apply such techniques as using eliciting questions.

*- A balance between individual work, pair-work and group-work*

Learners might differ in their mental capacity. Some can be more quick-minded than others. Too much pair-work or group-work can lessen the amount of time required for full understanding by some learners. All pair-work

and group-work activities should therefore be strictly monitored to ensure the equal cognitive participation of all members of the class.

*- L1's usage is approved of when necessary*

With the involvement of meta-language, an all-English explanation might not ensure a high percentage of learners' comprehensibility, so L1 usage can be acceptable as a means of double-checking students' understanding. This applies only to teachers' oral explanations. However, this practice should be kept down to a minimum and only used as the last resort when the teacher strongly believes that learners do not fully understand the meta-language. Teachers' abuse of L1 in class might encourage some learners to switch to L1 when they do not necessarily have to, for example when they can attempt to find alternative ways to express their ideas in English.

*- Homework*

The teaching should help learners build up their own strategies and independent understanding of English information structure, therefore homework writing and reading tasks are of equal importance as classroom engagement.

### 6.5. Classroom tasks and activities

When designing tasks for each lesson, we take into consideration the following requirements:

- The tasks require cognitive activities from learners

- Tasks designed by colleagues and researchers which could serve our approach should be made use of

Classroom tasks and activities utilized in this teaching method are designed based on teaching suggestions by authors of the clause



relational approach and genre analysis approach to text analysis e.g., McCarthy (1991) [50], McCarthy and Carter (1994) [19], Widdowson (1978) [3], Hoey (1983 [54], 1991 [55], 1994 [56], 2001 [57]), Crombie (1985a [51]), Crombie (1985b [52]); Swales (1981 [58]; 1990 [59]); and Swales & Feak (1994) [60]. In general the suggestions reveal the importance of teaching learners how sentences are combined in discourse to produce discourse meaning and how to identify the organizational patterns in texts as well as the linguistic means by which these patterns are signaled. The activities on the whole involve students' cognitively recognizing or identifying features of English information structure at both sentential and discourse level. At the sentential level, learners can be engaged in such activities as recognizing the function of non-canonical constructions in a given sentence or using an appropriate non-canonical construction to distribute information so that the felicity of the given and the new information is guaranteed. At discourse level, they can take part in such activities as identifying the clause relations in a given paragraphs or the textual patterns of one whole text.

The lessons take place in two phases: a meta-linguistic phase and a skill developing phase. The suggestions are used for activities in both phases. In the meta-linguistic phase, after learners are given explicit instruction enhancing their meta-knowledge of information structure, they are asked to do meta-linguistic tasks to guarantee and strengthen their understanding of the meta-knowledge which they would need to use in the skill developing phase. The tasks might involve, for example, learners' identifying the clause pattern of a given sentence or the textual pattern of a text. Teaching materials are taken from Quirk (1985)

[61] and authors of clause relational approach like McCarthy (1991) [50], McCarthy and Carter (1994) [19], Crombie (1985a [51]), and Crombie (1985b [52]). The tasks are repeated in the skill developing phase. However, in this phase, learners are asked to do reading and writing tasks specifically tailored to help them use the meta-knowledge to develop their skills. In principle, reading activities must take place prior to writing activities as the latter are based on the knowledge and skill promoted in learners in the former.

Several techniques are used to support learners' activities such as eliciting questions. This technique is helpful in getting learners through their reading and writing activities. In reading activities, for example, for a reading task in which learners have to find out the topic of a paragraph, the following questions might be asked to support learners' cognitive process of finding out the answer:

- Is the topic introduced in the first sentence of the paragraph?
- Which words/phrases in the sentence do you think are most important in bringing about the topic of the paragraph?
- How are the first two sentences in the paragraph related? Which cohesive device is used to show this relationship?
- What are the functions of the other sentences in the paragraph?

In writing activities, think-aloud protocols might be used to help elicit what is going on in learners' mind while they are doing their writing.

#### Reading tasks and activities

Using reading passages selected to suit their majors, learners are engaged in several cognitive tasks incorporating the meta-

knowledge given to them in the meta-linguistic phase. The tasks involve exploring features of information structure at sentential and discourse level. More attention should be paid to the discourse level structure as this could help learners grasp the main idea of the text. Sentential level structure is to be explored when the reading tasks require them to get some specific information or when learners could not understand the meaning of an important sentence which might block their comprehension of one whole paragraph or even the whole text. When getting stuck in understanding the meaning of a sentence, learners are encouraged to try the following meta-linguistic techniques:

- Judging whether the sentence bears a canonical or non-canonical construction. If the construction is canonical, analyze it to see which clause pattern it belongs to. This might help learners get the information required after realizing the subject, verb, object, complement, or adverbial of the sentence. Knowledge of the principle of end-weight and communicative dynamism can help them find out the most important information in the sentence. This technique seems more useful in case of long sentences with imbedded relative clauses, which might distract learners' attention away from some important information. If the construction is non-canonical, they could analyze it to see which non-canonical construction it has. Because each non-canonical construction is rather specific in its function (topicalizing, providing link with previous discourse, focusing, contrasting, etc) and in the way it distributes the given and the new information, meta-knowledge in this aspect helps learners pick out the important information in the sentence.

Several other techniques and activities can be used to help learners understand the main idea of a text.

- Recognizing textual patterns

The simplest form of the activities involves learners being asked to identify the pattern of a given text. There are techniques to support these activities, for example, using text-frames, the terms Hewings & McCarthy (1988) [62] and McCarthy & Carter (1994) [19] use to refer to diagrams representing textual patterns. Recognizing textual patterns by using diagrammatic representations of the patterns according to these authors is 'one of the skills of efficient readers of English'. The suggestions for the activities are offered by McCarthy & Carter (1994:60-61) [19]. In these activities, students are given the text, the text frame, and a blank frame, which is a copy of the text frame without any entries (labels and line numbers). Students are asked to make brief notes in the blank frame that would answer questions such as 'what is the basis for the claim in sentences 1-3?', or 'what claim is made in sentences 4-6?'

- Recognizing textual segments/elements of a textual pattern

The activities involve the teacher giving the students a suggested pattern of a text and the students' task being to find out the textual segments. Students are asked to rewrite some textual segments to strengthen or soften their functions (denying, correcting, etc.) They might be asked to identify, e.g., the problem, the situation, the solution, and the evaluation of a text bearing solution-problem pattern.

- Recognizing cognitive relations among clauses

This technique is used to help learners better understand local semantic relationships among the clauses using the meta-knowledge of

such relations as cause-consequence and the cohesive devices signalling these relationships.

#### Writing tasks and activities

The writing activities are designed to develop learners' sentential and discourse writing skill. At the sentential level, learners are expected to use their meta-knowledge of sentential level features of information structure to construct a message with respect to how the information should be distributed most appropriately in the light of adjoining sentences. Some activities involve learners deciding on the most appropriate canonical or non-canonical construction to maintain text coherence.

Discourse level writing activities aims at helping learners incorporating discourse knowledge of information structure in constructing larger units of discourse organization. Using their knowledge of clause relations, types of clause relations, clause relation signals, textual segments (discourse elements), and textual patterns, they are engaged in such activities as using appropriate cohesive devices to create a possible clause relation between two textual segments, reorganizing jumbled textual segments to make a coherent text, deciding on the most appropriate textual pattern for a given topic or constructing a text-frame for an assigned essay.

#### 6.6. Teaching and learning modes

The most preferable and most suitable teaching and learning modes used in this method are pair-work and group-work, which encourage mutual cognitive labor when solving tasks requiring shared knowledge, e.g., when learners are asked to read and answer questions involving the meta-knowledge of information structure. This is applied even in the meta-

linguistic phase even though this phase is more teacher-led than in the skill developing phase. Individual characteristics are taken into consideration when forming pairs or groups based on such factors as learners' level of proficiency, their emotions towards other students in the class. Some students might be reluctant to be in the same pair or groups with one or the other of the students in the class and this could affect their cooperation in the pair-work or group-work. Learners are encouraged to form their own groups. The teacher only intervenes when there is a problem with the grouping e.g., when students of higher levels of proficiency group together leaving students of lower levels of proficiency working together and there is no-one in the group to lead the activities.

Another issue to consider is the balance between individual work and pair-work/group-work. Learners should be allowed to have some time of their own to be engaged in cognitive tasks to ensure they understand what they are to do without being suppressed by other students in the group.

### 7. Summary and Conclusion

In this paper we have introduced a cognitive meta-linguistic approach to teaching L2 learners' reading and writing skills for their communicative language ability development. The model adopted in the teaching approach is Bachman's (1990) [1] framework of communicative language ability. In Bachman's framework, information structure competence is part of textual competence, subsumed under both cohesion and rhetorical organization competence. Reading and writing skills are seen as the implementation of language

communicative knowledge in contextualized language use while performing a specific task. There are two major reasons why we adopted Bachman's model. First, the distinction between what constitutes of knowledge and what constitutes of skill is quite clear. Second, the interaction between the components in the model is explicitly indicated. Bachman's framework gave a comprehensive view of the relationship between the enhancement of L2 learners' meta-knowledge of information structure and their reading and writing skill development as well as the interaction between information structure competence and other components in the model such as learners' world knowledge and the context of language use.

Our approach to learning is theoretically based on Anderson's (1983 [45]; 1985 [46]; 1990 [47]; 1995 [48]) ACT\* model, and Johnson's (1996) [49] DECPRO model. The general concept of the models is that learners need some initial declarative knowledge and proceduralize this knowledge through practice to develop their skill once the knowledge has become automatic. The sequence rather than the PRODEC is advocated in our approach because it is assumed to be more relevant to L2 learners who are not submerged in native speaking environment to develop their procedural knowledge in a natural way. The teaching principles emphasize the role of cognitive processes while learners are given knowledge of information structure and while they use this knowledge in their skill developing activities. The meta-knowledge includes major differences between English and Vietnamese information structure and how L1 strategies might affect their reading and writing in their L2. It is hoped that awareness of the differences and the interference they had on their L2 strategies

could help our learners overcome their problems and develop their skills. The activities presented in this approach are largely drawn from suggestions made by authors of the clause relational approach to text analysis such as McCarthy (1991) [50], McCarthy and Carter (1994) [19], Crombie (1985a [51]); and Crombie (1985b [52]) aiming at getting learners engaged in cognitive processes while exploring features of information structure and incorporating this knowledge to develop their reading and writing skills.

## References

- [1] Bachman, L. (1990). *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. OUP.
- [2] Bachman, L., and Palmer, A. (1996). *Language Testing in Practice*. OUP.
- [3] Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication*. OUP.
- [4] Halliday, M. A. K., and Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. Longman.
- [5] Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words?* Clarendon Press.
- [6] Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. CUP.
- [7] Halliday, M. A. K. (1973). *Relevant Models of Language* In M. A. K. Halliday (Eds.), *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. Elsevier North-Holland.
- [8] Halliday, M. A. K. (1976). *The Form of a Functional Grammar*. In G. Kress (Eds.), *Halliday: System and Function in Language*. OUP.
- [9] Tuan, H.A. (2013a). *Fundamental Sentential Level Issues of English Information Structure*. *Journal of Foreign Studies-VNU Journal of Science*, 29, 4, 45-62.
- [10] Tuan, H.A. (2013b). *Fundamental issues of English information structure at discourse level*. *Journal of Foreign Studies-VNU Journal of Science*, 29, 5.
- [11] Canagarajah, A. S. (2002). *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

- [12] Silva, T. (1993). Toward an understanding of the distinct nature of L2 writing: The ESL research and its implications. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27, 4, 657-678.
- [13] Johns, A. M. (1990). L1 composition theories: implications for developing theories of L2 composition. In B. Kroll (Eds.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom*. Cambridge: CUP, 24-36.
- [14] Meyer, B. J. F. (1977). The structure of prose: Effects on learning and implications for educational practice. In R. C. Anderson, and Spiro, R.J., and Montague, W.E. (Eds.), *Schooling and the acquisition of knowledge*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 197-208.
- [15] Singer, H. (1984). Friendly texts. In E. K. Dishner, Bean, T.W., Readance, J.E., and Moore, D.W. (Eds.), *Content and reading: Improving classroom instruction*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt, 114-127.
- [16] Hinds, J. (1987). Reader vs. writer responsibility: A new topology. In U. Connor, & Kaplan, R.B. (Eds.), *Writing across languages: Analysis of L2 text*. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 141-152.
- [17] Bialystok, E. (1982). On the Relationship between Knowing and Using Linguistic Forms. *Applied Linguistics* 3, 3, 181-206.
- [18] Widdowson, H. G. (1990). *Aspects of Language Teaching*. OUP.
- [19] McCarthy, M., and Carter, R. (1994). *Language as Discourse: Perspectives for Language Teaching*. London and New York: Longman.
- [20] Littlewood, W. T. (1984). *Foreign and Second Language Learning: Language-acquisition Research and its Implications for the Classroom*. CUP.
- [21] Mohan, B. A., and Lo, W.A.-Y. (1985). Academic writing and Chinese students: transfer and development factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 515-534.
- [22] Spack, R. (1997). The Rhetorical Construction of Multilingual Students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31, 4, 765-774.
- [23] Kubota, R. (1999). Japanese Culture Constructed by Discourses: Implications for Applied Linguistics Research and English Language Teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33, 9-35.
- [24] Li, C. N., and Thompson, S.A. (1976). Subject and Topic: A New Typology of Language. In C. N. Li (Eds.), *Subject and Topic*. Academic Press, 457-61.
- [25] Thompson, L. C. (1987). *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar*. University of Hawaii Press.
- [26] Duffield, N. (2007). "Vietnamese Online Grammar." Retrieved 22-08, 2007, from <http://vietnamese-grammar.group.shef.ac.uk/grammar>
- [27] Hao, C. X. (1991). *Tiếng Việt sơ thảo ngữ pháp chức năng (Vietnamese: An Introduction to Functional Grammar)*. Social Sciences Publisher.
- [28] Giap, N. T. (2000). *Dụng học Việt ngữ (Vietnamese Pragmatics)*. Hanoi National University Publisher.
- [29] Con, N. H. (2008). *Cấu trúc cú pháp của câu tiếng Việt: Chủ-Vị hay Đề- Thuyết (Syntactic Structure of Vietnamese Sentence: Subject-Predicate or Theme- Rheme?)* Scientific Conference of Vietnamese Studies.
- [30] Connor, U. (1996). *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural Aspects of Second Language Writing*. CUP.
- [31] Kaplan, R. B. (1966). Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education. *Language Learning*, 16, 1-20.
- [32] Kaplan, R. B. (1987). Cultural Thought Patterns Revisited. In U. Connor, and Kaplan, R.B. (Eds.), *Writing Across Languages: Analysis of L2 Texts*. Addison-Wesley.
- [33] Hinds, J. (1990). Inductive, Deductive, Quasi-inductive: Expository Writing in Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Thai. In U. Connor, and Johns, A.M. (Eds.), *Coherence in Writing - Research and Pedagogical Perspectives*. TESOL, 97-109.
- [34] Clyne, M. (1994). *Inter-cultural Communication at Work*. CUP.
- [35] Hinds, J. (1987). Reader vs. Writer Responsibility: A New Topology. In U. Connor, & Kaplan, R.B. (Eds.), *Writing across Languages: Analysis of L2 Text*. Addison-Wesley, 141-152.
- [36] Cam, N. (1991). Barriers to Communication between Vietnamese and Non-Vietnamese. *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, 1, 4, 40-45.
- [37] Kachru, B.B. (2005). *Asian Englishes: Beyond the canon*. Hong Kong University Press.
- [38] Kachru, Y. (2000). Culture, Context and Writing. In E. Hinkel (Eds.), *Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning*. CUP, 75-89.
- [39] Scollon, R. (1997). Contrastive Rhetoric, Contrastive Poetics, or Perhaps Something Else? *TESOL Quarterly*, 31, 2, 352-358.

- [40] Clyne, M. (1987). Cultural Differences in the Organization of Academic Texts. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11, 211-247.
- [41] Mauranen, A. (1993). Contrastive ESP Rhetoric: Metacontext in Finnish-English Economics Texts. *English for Specific Purposes*, 12, 3-22.
- [42] Ventola, E. (1992). Writing Scientific English: Overcoming Cultural Problems. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2, 2, 191-220.
- [43] Ventola, E., and Mauranen, A., and Ed. (Eds.) (1996). *Academic Writing: Intercultural and Textual issues*, John Benjamins.
- [44] Grabe, W., and Kaplan, R.B. (1996). *Theory and Practice of Writing*. Longman.
- [45] Anderson, J. R. (1983). *The Architecture of Cognition*. Harvard University Press.
- [46] Anderson, J. R. (1985). *Cognitive Psychology and Its Implications*. W.H. Freeman and Company.
- [47] Anderson, J. R. (1990). *Cognitive Psychology and Its Implications*. W.H. Freeman and Company.
- [48] Anderson, J. R. (1995). *Cognitive Psychology and Its Implications*. W.H. Freeman and Company.
- [49] Johnson, K. (1996). *Language Teaching and Skill Learning*. Blackwell.
- [50] McCarthy, M. (1991). *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers*. CUP.
- [51] Crombie, W. (1985a). *Process and Relation in Discourse and Language Teaching* OUP.
- [52] Crombie, W. (1985b). *Discourse and Language Learning: A Relational Approach to Syllabus Design* OUP.
- [53] Quirk, R., et al. (1972). *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. Longman.
- [54] Hoey, M. (1983). *On the Surface of Discourse*. George Allen and Unwin.
- [55] Hoey, M. (1991). *Patterns of Lexis in Text*. OUP.
- [56] Hoey, M. (1994). Signalling in Discourse: A Functional Analysis of a Common Discourse Pattern in Written and Spoken English. In M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Advances in Written Text Analysis*. Routledge, 26-45.
- [57] Hoey, M. (2001). *Textual Interaction*. Routledge.
- [58] Swales, J. M. (1981). *Aspects of Article Introductions*. University of Aston, Language Studies Unit.
- [59] Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. CUP.
- [60] Swales, J. M., and Feak, C.B. (1994). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills-A Course for Non-native Speakers of English*. University of Michigan.
- [61] Quirk, R., et al. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Longman.
- [62] Hewings, M., and McCarthy, M.J. (1988). An Alternative Approach to the Analysis of Text. *Praxis des Neusprachlichen Unterrichts*, 1, 3-10.

## Đường hướng nhận thức siêu ngôn ngữ trong việc dạy kỹ năng đọc-viết cho học viên học tiếng Anh như ngôn ngữ thứ hai

Huỳnh Anh Tuấn

*Phòng Khoa học-Công nghệ, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội,  
Đường Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Bài báo bàn về khả năng áp dụng đường hướng nhận thức siêu ngôn ngữ trong việc dạy kỹ năng đọc-viết cho học viên học tiếng Anh như ngôn ngữ thứ hai trình độ trung cấp và trên trung cấp. Trong đường hướng này, người học được cung cấp kiến thức về cấu trúc thông tin tiếng Anh để sử dụng cho việc phát triển kỹ năng đọc-viết. Ba vấn đề được bàn đến khi áp dụng đường hướng này vào việc giảng dạy ngôn ngữ bao gồm: những gợi mở mang tính sư phạm của khung năng lực ngôn ngữ giao tiếp của Bachman (1990) trong giảng dạy và kiểm tra đánh giá ngôn ngữ; vai trò của kiến thức về cấu trúc thông tin tiếng Anh đối với việc phát triển kỹ năng giao tiếp; sự cần thiết của việc

cung cấp mảng kiến thức siêu hình này cho học viên học tiếng Anh như ngôn ngữ thứ hai trong việc phát triển kỹ năng đọc-viết của họ. Bài báo cũng trình bày cụ thể các cấu phần của đường hướng bao gồm cơ sở lí thuyết, nguyên tắc giảng dạy, kiến thức và kỹ năng đích, các nhiệm vụ và hoạt động trong lớp học. Đường hướng này có thể được áp dụng tại nhiều cơ sở giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở Việt Nam và một số nước Châu Á khác. Tuy nhiên, các nghiên cứu thực tiễn chứng minh khả năng áp dụng của đường hướng này không nằm trong phạm vi thảo luận của bài báo.

*Từ khóa:* Nhận thức, siêu ngôn ngữ, cấu trúc thông tin, phát triển kỹ năng, năng lực ngôn ngữ giao tiếp.