HOW MUCH OF AN ACCENT? TOWARD A MODEL OF CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC FOR WRITING CENTRE TUTORS

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TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- 1. Background to Research
- 2. Dependent Variable – Contrastive Rhetoric
- 3. Intervening Variable – Role of the Tutor
- 4. Intervening Variable – Client Agency
- 5. Intervening Variable – Contextual Factors
- 6. Dependent Variable – Second Language Output
- 7. Conclusion – How much of an accent?

BACKGROUND

- Term Paper for Writing Studies class
- Prerequisite for Tutors
- Clients at C4W
  - 50/50 ESL/Native Speakers
- Term Paper Thesis:
  - How much help should tutors provide?
  - Or, how much of an accent?
  - Surprisingly: No Model:
  - First steps to making model

DEPENDENT VARIABLE – CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

- Differences at level of discrete sentence (word and phrase)

- Differences at rhetorical level (organization of the whole text)

- CR: Study of how first language and culture influence acquisition of subsequent languages

- Tutors cannot appropriate – but no model for how much help

INTERVENING VARIABLE 1 – ROLE OF THE TUTOR

▶ Four Choices (from Carol Severino and Min-Zhan Lu):

  ▶ 1) Assimilationist

  ▶ 2) Accommodationist

  ▶ 3) Separatist

  ▶ 4) Conflict and Struggle Approach

INTERVENING VARIABLE 2 – THE CLIENT

▶ Nothing on client agency in writing centres

▶ John Berry's framework for immigrants (mirrors Severino)

  ▶ 1) Integration (keep measure of ethnic identity)
  ▶ 2) Separation (keep measure of ethnic identity; if forced, this is segregation)
  ▶ 3) Assimilation (do not wish to keep heritage culture)
  ▶ 4) Marginalization (do not wish to keep either culture)

INTERVENING VARIABLE 3 – CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

▶ Three variables:

    ▶ 1) Client Ability

    ▶ 2) Audience

    ▶ 3) Requirements of the Discipline

DEPENDENT VARIABLE – WRITING IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE

▶ Model being developed for CR situations only

▶ Model hopes to eventually provide a guide for writing tutors to deal with:

  ▶ 1) Sociocultural adjustments

  ▶ 2) Rhetorical differences

  ▶ 3) Linguistic ability

CONCLUSION

▶ With model:

       1) Define role of CR in second language acquisition

       2) Best role for tutor to play

       3) Development of vocabulary and skills to inform clients of options

       4) Could eventually provide diagnostic tool for tutors and clients

▶ REMEMBER: Client must be final arbiter of how much of an accent!