

University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Faculty of Arts

First Year Examination in Arts (English), Semester 1, 2016

ENG 1104 – Writing, Reading and Rhetoric

Two Hours

**Please answer ALL THREE questions.**

1. You have been provided with two extracts from texts. Read them carefully, and write a short reflective response that addresses: (i) the register of the text, (ii) the degree of formality and writing conventions that you observe, (iii) the complexity of the text, and (iv) the projected audience of this text.

**(12 marks)**

- a. This Interim Report contains certain forward-looking statements with respect to the financial condition, results of operations and business of the group.

Statements that are not historical facts, including statements about the Bank's beliefs and expectations, are forward-looking statements. Words such as 'expects', 'anticipates', 'intends', 'plans', 'believes', 'seeks', 'estimates', 'potential' and 'reasonably possible', variations of these words and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These statements are based on current plans, estimates and projections, and therefore undue reliance should not be placed on them. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made, and it should not be assumed that they have been revised or updated in the light of new information or future events.

Forward-looking statements involve inherent risks and uncertainties. Readers are cautioned that a number of factors could cause actual results to differ, in some instances materially, from those anticipated or implied in any forward-looking statement.

- b. Truth commissions have emerged globally as a strategy for societies responding to gross violations of human rights and major injustices. Whether a society has undergone a period of authoritarianism, dictatorship, civil war, apartheid, or colonialism, truth commissions have become an increasingly popular and receptive tool for addressing such atrocities (Sooka, 2009; Dal Secco, 2008; Valji, 2010; Nagy, 2008). Truth commissions also vary across geo-political context, depending on social, economic and political landscapes. In this thesis I compare how the truth and reconciliation commissions in Canada and South Africa vary in their approach to gender. If truth and reconciliation commissions (TRC) are venues to address past injustices, then the different gendered experiences of injustice need to be centred in the work of commissions. Yet, as I argue, the Canadian TRC has only minimally incorporated gender differences into its work, and while the South African TRC made women's experiences more central it too did not fully address the impact of gendered forms of domination.

2. You have been provided with a thesis statement for an argumentative essay. You will need to write **two** topic sentence paragraphs that would form the body of an essay relevant to this thesis statement, and thus (i) develops on ideas set out in the thesis, and (ii) builds two main arguments that support the stated thesis.

(18 marks)

**Thesis statement:** Rather than emerge as a space of cultural belonging defined by sport and sportsmanship, the Olympics has become one more arena in which states assert national boundaries, dominance and national sentiment.

3. You have been provided with two introductory sections from published texts. For each of them (i) identify the key points raised by the authors in the introduction. Then (ii) identify and indicate the statement/s you would consider most suited to function as a thesis, and (iii) comment on the statement/s, discussing whether or not they are successful as a thesis, suggesting edits where necessary.

(20 marks)

- a. From: Velasco, P., & García, O. (2014). Translanguaging and the writing of bilingual learners. *Bilingual Research Journal* 37(1), 6-23.

The key to successful teaching is knowing how students learn. Learning involves providing students with different avenues to process, construct, and acquire academic content. In the case of bilingual education, and despite its growth over the world in the 21st century (García, 2009), there is little understanding of how two or more languages interact and affect learning. This is because most bilingual education programs separate languages strictly, viewing bilinguals as “two monolinguals in one” (Grosjean, 1989).

But in the recent past, scholars have challenged the strict separation of languages in classrooms, opening up space for what we are calling here the practice of translanguaging. This article contributes to the emerging literature on the theory of translanguaging. It focuses specifically on the potential of translanguaging for bilingual writers and presents evidence of how translanguaging during the writing process—in planning, drafting, and production—is particularly important for bilingual students as they learn to self-regulate their complex linguistic repertoire.

We start this article by reviewing the literature on translanguaging, to then focus on the literature on biliteracy, and specifically on the development and teaching of writing to bilinguals. We then present and analyze the language use in 10 short texts written by young bilingual children (kindergarten to fourth grade) enrolled in dual-language bilingual education programs in Spanish/ English and Korean/ English. As we will see, the five writing samples selected for discussion in this article make evident that the young bilingual writers use translanguaging to achieve higher standards of thought, creativity, and language use than would be restricted to monolingual or double-bilingual processes. Rather than see translanguaging as a simple teaching scaffold, this article makes evident the potential of translanguaging to meet higher standards, specifically in academic writing.

writing and to promote bilingual students' self-regulation of their entire linguistic repertoire.

- b. From: Canagarajah, S. (2013). Reconstructing heritage language: Resolving dilemmas in language maintenance for Sri Lankan Tamil migrants. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 222, 131-155.

In the context of migration and diaspora life, issues of language maintenance become very challenging. As Mufwene (2002) succinctly puts it, migrants from underprivileged backgrounds and speaking non-privileged languages experience the pressure to move ahead socially by learning the globally privileged languages. This is not an easy choice, as the claims of identity and group solidarity are also important. Migrants are all too aware of the negative consequences of abandoning their heritage languages.

Such dilemmas have generated a debate among sociolinguists on the place of heritage languages in contemporary contexts of globalization and migration. Scholars are divided into polarized camps on this question. The discussion has been framed in terms of dichotomies such as the following (to summarize the debate between Brutt-Griffler [2002] and Skuttnab-Kangas [2004], for example):

- territoriality/mobility
- tradition/modernity
- ethnic interests / class interests
- community solidarity / individual needs
- essence/hybridity

For scholars like Skuttnab-Kangas, language maintenance is connected to ecological and territorial preservation. Loss of languages also means loss of local knowledge, which is tied to ecological resources and cultural diversity. However, for scholars like Brutt-Griffler, maintaining local languages means being left out of conditions leading to cultural change and social progress. It is motivated by a conservative attitude of valuing tradition at the cost of modernization. Brutt-Griffler also points out that the claim for language maintenance prioritizes ethnic interests above class interests. As we know from history, elite groups have denied members of their community access to privileged languages and resources in the name of preserving traditional identities. Thus the elite safeguard their vested interests tied to proficiency in privileged languages. Similarly, there is a dilemma between community solidarity and individual needs. Should one focus on his or her own economic mobility and learn the privileged languages – or affirm community solidarity at all costs by maintaining heritage languages? Such questions are complicated by postmodern orientations to language and identity. Many scholars now hold that identities are splintered and languages are hybrid, as communities are in contact (Hall 1997). Therefore, for scholars like Brutt-Griffler, calling for heritage language maintenance implies essentializing identities and languages (see also Edwards 2001). However, Skuttnab-Kangas considers such discourses as having a debilitating effect on the interests of underprivileged communities and their languages.

While scholars are polarized along these lines on the question of language maintenance, migrant groups are discovering their own ways of negotiating these dilemmas. It appears that scholars are not granting enough agency to migrants to creatively devise their own ways of resolving their conflicts. It is possible that

migrants may develop attitudes and practices that help maintain heritage languages without hindering their socioeconomic mobility. To study such possibilities, we need ethnographies that take a closer look at the ways migrants negotiate these dilemmas. While providing knowledge on the strategies of dealing with heritage language maintenance in migrant contexts, such studies can also help re-theorize language and identity in mobility. In this article, I present findings on the attitudes and practices of the Sri Lankan Tamil (SLT) diaspora members in traditionally English-dominant countries, US, UK and Canada, to theorize their ways of negotiating dilemmas in language maintenance.

\*\*\*\*\*