

Revista Canaria de  
ESTUDIOS INGLESES

Revista Canaria de  
ESTUDIOS INGLESES

Universidad de La Laguna

EDITOR

Manuel Brito (ULL)

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Pablo Domínguez (ULL)

EDITORIAL BOARD

Esther Álvarez López (UNIOVI), Rodrigo Andrés González (UB), Leslie Bobb-Wolff (ULL), Olivier Brossard (Université Paris Est-Marne la Vallée), Sally Burgess (ULL), Rui Carvalho Homem (Universidade do Porto), Francisco J. Castillo (ULL), María José Chivite (ULL), Francisco J. Cortés (ULL), Juan J. Cruz (ULL), Eva Darias Beautell (ULL), Aída Díaz Bild (ULL), Ana Díaz Galán (ULL), Balz Engler (Universität Basel), María Cruz Expósito (ULL), María del Carmen Fumero (ULL), María del Pilar García Mayo (UPV/EHU), José S. Gómez Soliño (ULL), Isabel González Díaz (ULL), María José González Rodríguez (ULL), María Luz González Rodríguez (ULL), Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy (UM), Manuel Augusto Hernández (ULL), María Beatriz Hernández (ULL), Adelaida Jurado Špuch (ULL), María Jesús Llerena (ULL), Andrzej Łyda (Uniwersytet Śląski), J. Lachlan Mackenzie (ILTEC Oporto/VU Amsterdam), Ricardo Mairal Usón (UNED), Javier Martín Arista (UNIRIOJA), María A. Martín Díaz (ULL), Matilde Martín González (ULL), Pedro Á. Martín Martín (ULL), Marie McMahon (ULL), Margarita Mele Marrero (ULL), Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (Université de Lausanne), Tomás Monterrey (ULL), María del Pino Montesdeoca (ULL), María Jesús Pérez Quintero (ULL), Michael Aaron Rockland (Rutgers University), Dulce Rodríguez González (ULL), Francisco Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (UNIRIOJA), Françoise Salager-Meyer (Universidad de Los Andes, Venezuela), Eulalia Sosa Acevedo (ULL), Justine Tally (ULL), Daniel Thomières (Université de Reims), Carmen Toledano Buendía (ULL).

SECRETARY

Juan Ignacio Oliva (ULL)

ADVISORY BOARD

Michael Benskin (Universitetet i Oslo), Charles Bernstein (University of Pennsylvania), Michael Davidson (University of California, San Diego), Bernd Dietz (Universidad de Córdoba), Teun A. Van Dijk (Universiteit van Amsterdam), Fernando Galván Reula (Universidad de Alcalá), Maggie Humm (University of East London), Juana M. Liceras (University of Ottawa), Alan Sinfield (Sussex University), Jeremy Smith (University of Glasgow).

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Pedro Domínguez (ULL), Maribel García (ULL), Juana Herrera Cubas (ULL), Alejandro López de Vergara (ULL), David Roberts (ULL), Elena Sánchez (ULL), Dolores Torres (ULL).

PUBLISHER

Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de La Laguna  
Campus Central. 38200 La Laguna. Santa Cruz de Tenerife. E-mail: svpubl@ull.es

DESIGN

J.H. Vera/Javier Torres/Luis C. Espinosa

TYPESET BY

Servicio de Publicaciones

PRINTED BY

Gráficas Sabater

ISSN: 0211-5913

Depósito Legal: TF 275/81

No portion of this publication may be reproduced without  
the express written consent of the publisher.

Revista Canaria de  
ESTUDIOS INGLESES

59

SERVICIO DE PUBLICACIONES  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA LAGUNA, 2009

REVISTA canaria de estudios ingleses. — N° 1 (1980) - . — La Laguna : Universidad, Servicio de Publicaciones, 1980-  
Semestral  
ISSN 0211-5913  
1. Literatura inglesa-Publicaciones periódicas 2. Lengua inglesa-Gramática-Publicaciones periódicas  
I. Universidad de La Laguna. Servicio de Publicaciones, ed.  
820(05)  
802.0-5(05)

#### SUBMISSION INFORMATION

*RCEI* invites contributions of articles in such fields as linguistics, literature, critical theory, history, and cultural studies within the English Philology. Manuscript submissions, presented in English between 4,500 and 5,500 words, should conform to the guidelines found in the latest *MLA Style Manual*. For specific instructions on style contact the editorial office. Authors are expected to send their contributions as an attachment to [rceing@ull.es](mailto:rceing@ull.es) and mail three double-spaced, printed copies with wide margins. Short abstracts (about 100 words) in English and Spanish are required, along with the key words (4-8) of the essay in both languages. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to introduce stylistic changes and to adjust illustrations. Further details on submissions: <http://webpages.ull.es/users/rceing/submissions.html>.

Any acknowledgments must appear as an initial, unnumbered note. Footnotes, numbered consecutively throughout the manuscript, must be, in the case of quoted material, after the punctuation mark (indented quotes) or the quotation marks. Digressive or excessively lengthy footnotes should be avoided. Subsequent references to a previously cited work require only the author's last name but in the case of previous citations to more than one work by the same author, a title must appear (as is clear, *op.cit.* is not to be used).

Each contributor should send a note stating specifically his/her manuscript is only being considered for publication by *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*. Authors may republish their own material, provided such republication provides due acknowledgment. Published twice yearly, in April and November.

Editorial correspondence and all copies of books to be considered for reviews should be addressed to the Editor, *RCEI*, Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana, Facultad de Filología, Universidad de La Laguna, Campus de Guajara, 38200 La Laguna, Tenerife, Islas Canarias, España. Decisions on articles submitted are normally made within three months and those accepted published within a year. As is traditional academic practice, *RCEI* only publishes (blind) peer-reviewed essays. For further details on *RCEI* editorial policies, please visit our website: <http://webpages.ull.es/users/rceing>.

The *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* is scanned, indexed, or abstracted by the following: ABELL (Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature), ABES (Annotated Bibliography for English Studies), AustLit (The Resource for Australian Literature), BD-ISOC, British Humanities Index, Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA), ERIH (European Reference Index for the Humanities), Humbul Humanities Hub, IBZ (International Bibliography of Periodical Literature on the Humanities and Social Sciences) IBR (International Bibliography of Book Reviews of Scholarly Literature on the Humanities and Social Sciences), Latindex, Linguistics Abstracts On-Line, LLBA (Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts), MLA Directory of Periodicals, MLA International Bibliography, Periodicals Contents Index, SCOPUS, Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory, and *The Year's Work in English Studies*.

To consult the frequency of international and national citations of articles published in our journal, please visit this web page: <http://webpages.ull.es/users/rceing/citations.html>.

© Copyright, 2009 RCEI. Universidad de La Laguna.

Our e-mail address is: [rceing@ull.es](mailto:rceing@ull.es)

For further details concerning journal exchange, back issues, etc., please contact:

*Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*  
Servicio de Publicaciones  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA LAGUNA  
Campus Central  
38200 LA LAGUNA (TENERIFE, ESPAÑA)  
E-mail: [svpubl@ull.es](mailto:svpubl@ull.es)

# CONTENTS

## SPECIAL ISSUE

Communicating Science: ESP Studies at the Outset of the 21st Century <i>Pedro Martín Martín and Isabel K. León Pérez, guest-editors</i>	
Introduction .....	9

## ARTICLES

Negotiating Publication: Author Responses to Peer Review of Medical Research Articles in Thoracic Surgery <i>Christine Feak</i> .....	17
--	----

Learning English for Academic Purposes: Why Chinese EFL Learners Find EAP So Difficult to Master <i>David C.S. Li</i> .....	35
--	----

“Dialogging”: A Social Interactive Practice in Academic Writing <i>Nancy Lea Eik-Nes</i> .....	49
---	----

Concluding Your Masters’ Level Thesis <i>Jo Lewkowicz</i> .....	63
--	----

Promotional Strategies in Research Article Introductions: An Interlinguistic and Cross-disciplinary Genre Analysis <i>Pedro Martín Martín and Isabel K. León Pérez</i> .....	73
---	----

Scientific Writing Assistance for Non-Native Speakers of English: Shifting Right on the Interactivity Spectrum <i>Ray Cooke and Susan Birch-Becaas</i> .....	89
---	----

## MISCELLANY

Teaching Methods and Their Conceptualisation from a Cognitive Perspective of Knowledge Acquisition <i>Raquel Criado</i> .....	103
--	-----

## REVIEW

Romanticism Regained <i>Fabio L. Vericat</i> .....	119
---	-----



COMMUNICATING SCIENCE:  
ESP STUDIES AT THE OUTSET OF THE 21st CENTURY

*Pedro Martín Martín* and  
*Isabel K. León Pérez,*  
guest-editors





## INTRODUCTION

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is now a firmly established sub-discipline in Applied Linguistics with research in this area making an important contribution to teaching. Over the last four decades ESP research has seen a number of changes in focus from the early studies in Register Analysis in the 1960's, through work in Rhetorical Analysis in the 1980's, to Genre Analysis, the current dominant paradigm. Each of these approaches had its own methodology. The early work on register used needs analyses as a basis of syllabus design; the New Rhetoricians drew on insights from other disciplines as well as Applied Linguistics. The Genre Analysts examine not only representative texts of a particular disciplinary community, but also the physical situation in which they are produced. Analysis, therefore, has become more ethnographic and genre is conceived as a dynamic phenomenon, subject to change and adaptation by the participants, in accordance with the social purposes that the academic context demands. The notion of discourse community has thus become central to an understanding of how genres are framed.

With the advent and refinement of computer-based corpora it is possible nowadays to relate the quantitative data that emerge from concordance analysis to discourse features of texts. The impact of new technologies has also led to the creation of new genres, such as e-mail, postings on electronic lists or e-logs (see, for example, Nancy Lea Eik-Nes's contribution to this volume), which call for research and pedagogical responses. Two other areas, namely critical approaches to research and discourse (Benesch; Canagarajah), and cultural differences (Ostler; Salager-Meyer, Alcaraz Ariza, and Pabón Berbesí) are having an increasing influence on the development of ESP studies.

We must recall at this point that ESP, as Dudley-Evans and St John note, has traditionally been divided into two main areas: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). While EAP is concerned with the language taught in specific disciplines (e.g. biology, psychology, linguistics), EOP refers to English that is not for academic but for professional purposes, that is, the language taught in administration, law, business or medicine. We may thus distinguish between studying the language and discourse of, for example, medi-



cine for academic purposes, which is designed to help medical students while they are undertaking undergraduate or postgraduate study, and the language taught for professional preparation (occupational purposes), which is designed for practising doctors. Nevertheless, Flowerdew and Peacock argue that a distinction between these two branches of ESP is not clear-cut, since a lot of work carried out in higher education is preparation for the professional occupations that students are likely to take up when they graduate and, therefore might be also classified as EOP.

Be that as it may, the fact that English has been well established nowadays as the language of international scientific and technical communication has led, unsurprisingly, to an increasing concern for the teaching of English with the specific aim of helping learners to study and conduct research in that language. Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2) go beyond the idea of preparing students to read and study in English to developing new kinds of literacy, equipping them with the communicative skills to participate in particular academic and cultural contexts “by grounding instruction in an understanding of the cognitive, social and linguistic demands of specific academic disciplines.” The educational response to this phenomenon at university and other academic settings has been the rapid expansion of EAP throughout the world. The growing interest in EAP research activity in a variety of situations is reflected in the numerous papers that are frequently presented at international conferences related to EAP (or with special sessions on ESP), and in the increasing number of research articles featured in Applied Linguistics journals, particularly, *English for Specific Purposes* and the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. Much of the research reported in these publications has shown that academics have specific communicative needs which are defined by the social context (education, values, expectations) and rhetorical practices of their particular disciplinary communities.

The increasing pressure to publish internationally that is brought to bear on users of English as an additional language has provided the impetus for research primarily concerned with the academic discourse conventions of English. The objective is to help these scholars to publish and communicate their research in international fora (see, for example, Burgess and Martín-Martín). There have also been pedagogical demands on the EAP community that have grown out of the need for materials at different levels. EAP has expanded its scope from courses aimed at undergraduates to the teaching of English in the academy at all proficiency levels (see Jo Lewkowicz’s work on Masters’ theses, this volume), including the training of non-English speaking background scholars who teach, carry out research and publish in this additional language.

As laudable as the contributions of EAP researchers and practitioners may be, it should be made clear that the dominance of English as the international scientific language is not without negative consequences. The imposition of the rhetorical conventions favoured by the English-speaking community has led to the loss of academic registers and genres in some minority languages and has clearly put at a disadvantage those scholars who use English as an additional language; particularly those who work “on the periphery” (see Ray Cooke and Susan Birch-Becaas, this volume).



Following two previous special issues of the *RCEI* journal entitled “English(es) in the Academy” (no. 44) and “Writing in a Global Context” (no. 53), the present issue brings together a collection of papers by major researchers from various international institutions, who were invited to contribute papers on the latest ESP trends, particularly research into writing in academic settings. Most of the authors in this volume argue that there is a general lack of specific guidance to writers as to how to tackle the rhetorical conventions which allow them to meet the expectations of the members of the international scientific community; and all the authors without exception have in common as their prime concern offering assistance to novice writers, and especially non-native speakers of English, with the acquisition of the necessary rhetorical skills to produce successful academic writing in English.

A key stage in publishing a research paper is the peer review process. Christine Feak comprehensively describes this process in the opening article. She terms it a complex genre cluster made up of reviewer reports, submission letters and the author’s responses to the reviewers (ARRs). It is this latter type of texts precisely that Feak explores in her paper. She starts by discussing the place of ARR within the research article (RA) network. Drawing on a corpus of ARR, in the subfield of Thoracic Surgery, submitted by authors affiliated to various Anglophone and non-Anglophone institutions, Feak analyses the move structure of the available data and proposes a typical ARR model. She finally examines some of the salient linguistic features of the texts, and offers a comparison of ARR written by researchers from different academic cultures. Apart from the usefulness of Feak’s study for authors facing the task of writing an ARR, her work also illustrates the interesting aspect of cultural variation in politeness strategies used in academic settings.

Despite the difficulties that novice writers from English-speaking backgrounds may experience when writing up research in English, it is unquestionable that this represents a more daunting task for non-English speaking background writers. To begin with there are obvious linguistic differences related to linguistic typologies. A case in point are speakers of Chinese languages in Greater China, which has the largest number of learners of English in the world and where English is becoming increasingly relevant at all educational levels. David Li takes up this issue in the next article in this volume. He discusses the main typological and linguistic factors which impact on acquisition for Chinese EAP students. Through the contrastive analysis of the learners’ language output, the author focuses on the most salient lexico-grammatical deviations from EAP, which he sees as arising in part from cross-linguistic influences from the learner’s mother tongue. This contribution implicitly raises the issue of the need for a greater tolerance of different rhetorical styles in international publications, given the fact that is now used across national boundaries.

The study of the writing practices of postgraduate students, who use English as an additional language, is the focus of attention of the next two contributions. Nancy Lea Eik-Nes looks at how Norwegian engineering students negotiate their identities in their disciplines through the writing of logs. Using Hyland’s model of interaction in academic discourse, the author examines the textual signs of sub-



jective interaction in the paper logs and e-logs submitted by doctoral students in an academic writing course and then compares them with Hyland's data obtained in his previous analysis of linguistic markers of interaction in RAs related to the discipline in which these students were engaged, with the ultimate purpose of establishing the degree of interaction in the logs. Her results reveal some typological differences and a higher degree of interaction in the logs, particularly the e-logs, than in the RAs. The author, however, points out the need of a qualitative analysis to better account for the results obtained. In any case, what remains clear is that the practice of "dialogging," as the author puts it, may well represent a means of facilitating student development in academic writing.

Jo Lewkowicz's essay stems from the same concern with assisting students who use English as an additional language, on this occasion, in the demanding task of writing their Masters' theses in English. Her study explores the rhetorical structure of the concluding section of Masters' theses written by Polish Applied Linguistics students and then compares it with the typical rhetorical moves of English theses as described in the literature. The results of her research show a great variability in how conclusions are written, a variability she relates to the specific context in which they were produced. A key element in this context is specific advice on how to write a thesis. The author notes major differences between the advices given in the two languages. In the light of the results obtained, Lewkowicz concludes by questioning the validity of adhering to writing conventions considered as appropriate in English-medium universities in contexts such as the Polish university system.

Within the same contrastive rhetoric tradition, our paper moves on to the analysis of the prevalent rhetorical practices of professional writers from two different cultural environment and disciplinary domains. Due to the increasing pressure to publish scientific articles, unsurprisingly, academics need to use a series of rhetorical strategies which help them promote their research and thus convince their peers of its importance in order to get their papers accepted. Our study looks comparatively at the use of promotional strategies in the introduction section of RAs written in English and Spanish in the two related subdisciplines of Clinical and Health Psychology, and Dermatology. The results reveal that, in general terms, the English texts present a higher degree of rhetorical promotion in both fields, although some degree of cross-disciplinary variation was also found. This indicates that in shaping the rhetorical and promotional features of the genre in question, when discipline and national cultural factors interact, the latter tends to override the influence of disciplinary conventions.

With a very explicit pedagogical concern, the final contribution in this issue also addresses the topic of how academics manage to get their work published. Ray Cooke and Susan Birch-Becaas investigate, in particular, the resources available to non-native English speaking (NNES) graduate students and academics to facilitate their access to the "gate-kept" world of publishing in English. After discussing some of the obstacles that NNES researchers face in order to get their work accepted for publication in English-language journals, the authors turn their attention to the notion of human-computer interaction by discussing the digital materials and procedures used until now as to meet the requirements of NNES scientists,



and end up by describing an innovative web-based writing tool (Type Your Own Script) which, on the basis of the corrected first drafts of Francophone researchers who eventually succeeded in publishing their papers in international journals, illustrates how scientific writing functions by drawing the learner's attention to the linguistic and rhetorical features that typically pose problems. It is worth highlighting here the fact that the writing models to imitate are not longer those of L1 English-speaking authors. An approach such as this, apart from offering unquestionable benefits to French-speaking academics and students, also problematises the Anglophone cultural ethnocentrism which leads to the judging of textual patterns other than those used by English-speakers as, in Ostler's terms, anomalous.

To conclude, we would most sincerely like to thank all the guest-authors for their insightful contributions to this special issue. At the very outset of this new century, it represents a modest step forward in ESP research, a field still firmly grounded in practical education needs.

Pedro MARTÍN MARTÍN  
Isabel K. LEÓN PÉREZ

## WORKS CITED

- BENESCH, Sarah. "Rights Analysis: Studying Power Relations in an Academic Setting." *English for Specific Purposes* 18.4 (1999): 313-327.
- BURGESS, Sally and Pedro MARTÍN-MARTÍN, eds. *English as an Additional Language in Research Publication and Communication*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2008.
- CANAGARAJAH, A. Suresh. "Multilingual Writers and the Academic Community: Towards a Critical Relationship." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 1.1 (2002): 29-44.
- DUDLEY-EVANS, Tony and Maggie Jo ST JOHN. *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- FLOWERDEW, John and Matthew PEACOCK. "Issues in EAP: A Preliminary Perspective." *Research Perspectives on English for Academic Purposes*. Ed. J. Flowerdew and M. Peacock. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 8-24.
- HYLAND, Ken and Liz HAMP-LYONS. "EAP: Issues and Directions." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 1.1 (2002): 1-12.
- OSTLER, Shirley E. "Contrastive Rhetoric: An Expanding Paradigm." *Academic Discourse*. Ed. J. Flowerdew. Harlow: Longman, 2002. 167-181.
- SALAGER-MEYER, Françoise, María Ángeles ALCARAZ ARIZA and Marielys PABÓN BERBESÍ. "Hidden Influencers and the Scholarly Enterprise: A Cross-linguistic/Cultural Analysis of Acknowledgments in Medical Research Papers." *English for Professional and Academic Purposes*. Ed. M.F. Ruiz-Garrido, J.C. Palmer-Silveira and I. Fortanet-Gómez. Castellón: Universitat Jaume I. [Forthcoming]





## ARTICLES





# NEGOTIATING PUBLICATION: AUTHOR RESPONSES TO PEER REVIEW OF MEDICAL RESEARCH ARTICLES IN THORACIC SURGERY

Christine Feak  
University of Michigan

## ABSTRACT

A variety of genres can be found within the genre cluster of journal article publication. Some of these genres are open to public view (e.g. the research article). Others such as peer review comments, however, are occluded or visible only to the authors themselves and tend to be under-researched. Although peer reviewer comments have been the focus of increasing research, little work has been done on author responses to reviewers (ARRs) and editor commentary. This paper presents an initial analysis of a corpus of author responses in thoracic surgery and attempts to highlight some key characteristics of these texts.

KEY WORDS: Peer review, publication, medical research article, author response, genre cluster.

## RESUMEN

Dentro del macrogénero vinculado a la publicación de artículos científicos pueden distinguirse diversos géneros, entre los cuales algunos son de libre acceso al público (el propio artículo, por ejemplo) y otros, como los comentarios de los revisores, son, sin embargo, privados o sólo accesibles para los autores, por lo que generalmente no son objeto de análisis lingüístico. Aunque existe un interés cada vez mayor por los comentarios de los evaluadores, aún son escasos los estudios sobre las respuestas de los autores a los comentarios de revisores y editores. Este artículo presenta el análisis preliminar de un corpus de respuestas de autores en la especialidad de cirugía torácica con el objetivo de describir los rasgos característicos de este tipo de textos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: evaluación por pares, publicación, artículo médico científico, respuesta del autor, macrogénero.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1996 the term “occluded genre” was introduced by Swales to describe academic texts that were hidden from public view, but were nonetheless an important part of the genre network of scholars and researchers (Swales 46). Today one



might reasonably argue that truly occluded genres may be few in number since it seems almost any kind of text can be found on the Internet. Even so, whether a genre is fully or partly occluded, the challenges of composing such texts remain. Academic genres that have been identified as occluded include personal statements (Ding 369), tenure reports (Hyon 176), and letters of recommendation (Precht 242), some of which may be part of a larger cluster of occluded texts contributing to hiring, promotion, or tenure decisions. Yet another occluded genre cluster is that associated with the publication of research articles (RAs) (See Fig.1).

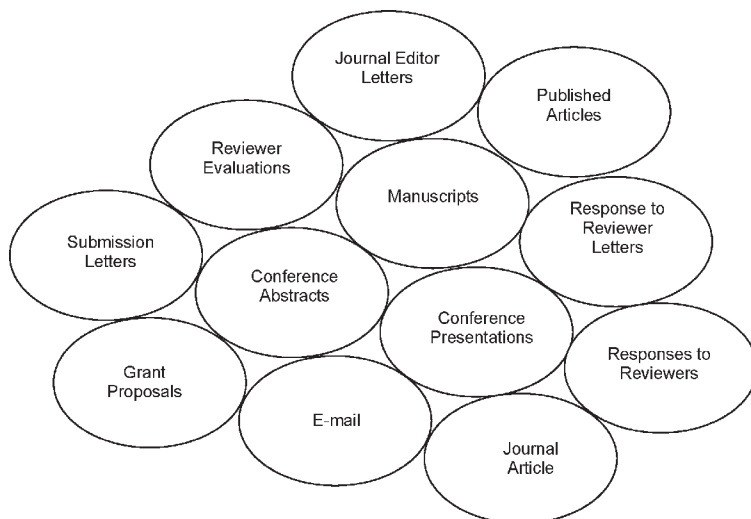


Figure 1. A Possible Publication Genre Cluster.

### 1.1. THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Peer review is a “resource intensive process” that relies on the efforts of unpaid, expert volunteers to evaluate manuscripts submitted to a journal for publication (Jefferson, Wager, and Davidoff 2790). As a gatekeeping activity, peer review has been part of the journal publication process for over 200 years and has “achieved near universal application” (Jefferson et al. 2787) among journals. While there is some variation in how journals conduct peer review, most aspects of the process are similar from one journal to the next. The review process begins when an editor receives a manuscript, at which point there may be a “desk rejection”,<sup>1</sup> perhaps

---

<sup>1</sup> Desk rejection practices vary according to discipline. While in the humanities only roughly 10% of journal editors accept or reject manuscripts without peer review, in medicine editors likely review all manuscripts (Mulligan 137).

based on a reading of the abstract alone (Swales and Feak 2). Reasons for desk rejection include excessive length, a topic of little current interest, and, most important, a poor fit between the content of the submitted manuscript and the focus of the journal (Shugan 592). Top journals, such as *Nature*, reject nearly 60% of manuscripts without further review (Greaves et al. n. pag.). If a manuscript survives this first stage, it is then sent to typically two or more reviewers, ideally experts in the specific content area of the manuscript, chosen by the editor “to comment anonymously and confidentially” on the merits of the paper (Greaves et al. n. pag.). Manuscripts may undergo double-blind review (the manuscript author and the reviewers’ names are not revealed), anonymous review (the author’s name is known to the reviewers, but the author does not know the reviewers’ names),<sup>2</sup> or transparent review (the manuscript author and the reviewer names are revealed) (Fortanet 27). The manuscript is evaluated by the reviewers, often based on a set of criteria or questions provided by the journal, prompting the reviewer to consider such aspects as potential interest among journal readers and the contribution of the work to the field. After considering the reviewers’ comments and recommendations, the editor then decides whether to accept the manuscript as is or with minor revision (very rare) (Jackson 908); reject (the decision for 90% or more of papers submitted to some journals [Miller and Harris 76]); or “invite” the author to revise and resubmit (with the likelihood of a review of the revised paper).

While most authors would like to have their work accepted as is or with only minor revision, most papers that are eventually published fall into the “revise and resubmit” category. An invitation to revise is not a guarantee of publication; rather it is an indication that the manuscript has the potential to be published, if it can be sufficiently improved to meet the expectations of the reviewers and editor. Upon receipt of the reviewers’ and editor’s comments, the author must decide whether to pursue publication in light of the commentary or withdraw the paper from further consideration, a decision that depends on whether the amount or nature of the revision is deemed reasonable, feasible, or worthwhile. If the author chooses to revise, the revision is eventually again submitted along with a response that outlines how the manuscript was revised. This response along with the revised article is generally sent to the original reviewers who re-evaluate the manuscript.

In order to successfully revise their manuscripts, authors who receive a “revise and resubmit” evaluation must, of course, understand the motivation underlying the comments and the exact nature of the changes being suggested (Gosden, “Give” 88). Overall, the editor’s goal in obtaining reviewer comments on these papers is to improve their quality and maintain the quality of the journal (Belcher 4). To this end, the one section of the RA that receives the greatest scrutiny is the discussion of the study findings. Gosden (“Give” 93), for example, found that nearly one-third of all reviewer comments focused on that section of the papers in his study. The next largest group of comments focused on technical details (confusion,

---

<sup>2</sup> Authors who are well known can often be identified despite blinding (Justice et al. 240).



errors, or insufficient detail therein), followed by questions regarding claims. References are also sometimes the target of questions, while formatting and organization less so.

Other studies of reviewer reports have characterized the discourse of gatekeeping as contentious (Gosden, “Thank” 5) and questioned the effectiveness and the fairness of peer review (Belcher 4). Still others have examined reviewer reports with a view toward helping researchers understand and interpret them (Fortanet 29; Gosden, “Thank” 88). While these studies have raised some very interesting issues in relation to peer review, the reviewer report is only one text in the genre cluster connected with the review process. Indeed, other texts relevant to the peer review process include the submission letter and more important the author’s response to the reviewer comments. Although this latter text may be considered secondary to the more central task of writing the RA, the response is nonetheless a significant part of the publication process as it can and does influence the likelihood of publication. General advice as to how to respond to reviewers’ comments can be found by searching the Internet or reading the author guidelines of some journals. Typically, this advice encourages authors do the following in their responses.

- Thank the reviewers and editor for their efforts.
- Respond to each point raised by the reviewers and editor.
- Indicate clearly how each point has been addressed.

Also, authors are reminded that their responses should be viewed as a polite conversation with the reviewers and editors in which changes are negotiated and discussed in a polite, professional manner (Benfield and Feak). Indeed, it has also been suggested that getting published involves a dialogue between reviewers and authors (Gosden, “Thank” 10). In the end the process is really all “about relationships and courtesy is appreciated” (Emerald Group Publishing).

While the recommendations are useful as an initial starting point, how they should in fact be implemented remains unclear. For instance, at a macro level the recommendations do not provide guidance regarding the extent to which a manuscript author should adopt the reviewers’ and editor’s suggestions for change. At a micro level, the recommendations give no indication of the characteristics of a good or adequate response to a comment. This lack of specific guidance to authors suggests the need for research that can shed light on the construction of these texts with a view toward providing assistance to those unfamiliar with their varied communicative purposes (Gosden, “Give” 88; Cargill and O’Connor 215). Indeed, as Gosden (“Thank” 4) points out, novices are at a disadvantage when expected to write a response to reviewer comments.

To address this need, this paper describes some preliminary research on the author response to reviewers (ARR). The focus of this research is a corpus consisting of ARRs written in connection with papers submitted to a top journal in thoracic surgery. Drawing from this small corpus of ARRs, this paper will discuss the place of ARRs within the RA genre network, propose a move structure, examine



some of their salient linguistic features, and offer some comparison of ARR's written by authors of different academic cultures.

## 2. THE CORPUS

The corpus is a subset of a larger collection of manuscript “jackets” (files) of published papers on a subspecialty of thoracic surgery that were submitted to the *Annals of Thoracic Surgery*<sup>3</sup> between 1997 and 1998. The manuscripts, all of which were eventually published, originated from medical institutions in Anglophone and in non-Anglophone countries. The files include all letters, manuscript drafts, and reviews produced in connection with those manuscripts and were generously made available to the author for the purposes of preparing materials for a series of workshops on writing for publication in thoracic surgery. The corpus analyzed for this study consists of all (N=16) ARR's connected with published articles that were first submitted in 1997, but not necessarily published in that year. Of the 16 published articles 6 were submitted from Anglophone countries (3 from the United States; 2 from Canada; 1 from Australia). The remaining ten papers originated from institutions in the following countries: Japan (4), Taiwan (1), Austria (2), France (2), and the Netherlands (1).

## 3. ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

A cursory analysis of the ARR's pointed toward some potential categories that might reveal a move structure: greeting, expression of gratitude, response to reviewer comments, statement regarding “publishability”, statement regarding willingness to make further changes, and close. A closer analysis revealed, however, five approaches to responding to reviewers. Some ARR's are letters that include within the body author responses to the reviewer comments; some ARR's consist of a cover letter and a separate list of all responses to the reviewers; others are a hybrid in which some author responses are in the body of a letter (usually those to the editor and/or those addressing points easily dealt with such as shortening the title) and some responses in a separate list; finally some responses are merely lists with no accompanying letter and in this corpus one ARR was a resubmission letter with no clear response to any reviewer or editor comments. Given the differences and the small sample, a defensible move structure cannot be proposed. Nonetheless, it is still interesting to look at how the different ARR's that included letters were struc-

---

<sup>3</sup> “*The Annals of Thoracic Surgery* provides outstanding original coverage of recent progress in chest and cardiovascular surgery and related fields. As the official journal of two of the largest American associations in its specialty, this leading monthly enjoys outstanding editorial leadership and maintains rigorous selection standards.” (<[http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws\\_home/505747/description#description](http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/505747/description#description)>).



tured. Table 1 shows the different kinds of responses along with the number of exemplars for each.

TABLE 1. RESPONSE STYLE

	ANGLOPHONE (N=6)	NON-ANGLOPHONE (N=10)	TOTAL (N= 16)
Letter including responses to reviewers	5	3	8
Letter (with no responses to reviewers) + separate list		1	1
Hybrid (letter including some responses and separate list)	1	3	4
No letter —list of responses only		2	2
Letter only with no discussion of reviewer comments		1	1

The choice of format seems to be largely dependent not so much on the number of actual changes made, but the nature of the requests for change. For ARR that included the response in the body of the letter, the number of changes addressed in the Anglophone letters ranged from 6-21, while for the manuscripts from non-Anglophone writers the range was from 6-14. Most of these changes were straightforward, focusing mainly on shortening the text, title, and abstract; reducing the number of citations; adding details on patients; changing figures; or rewording statements identified as being unclear. In many cases the responses consisted of as little as one word such as *done* or at most 3 sentences. As revealed in the Table, the majority of letters from Anglophone institutions were complete letters, suggesting that the manuscript authors had no significant changes to make to their texts.

The reasons for the choice of letter with a separate list or a hybrid could not be determined. However, for these two formats, authors wrote at least one lengthy response to a reviewer comment in the separate list, ranging from 5 to 12 sentences. The hybrids differed from the letter with list response in that the hybrids dealt with the more superficial or seemingly easy changes addressed in the body of the letter (similar to those found in the letter only form). Thus, in the body hybrid letters dealt with such issues as formatting, reductions in abstract or paper length as well as the number of references. More substantial issues, for instance why patients were not prone to developing a particular complication (i.e. air leak) were dealt with in the separate list. In regard to the last two approaches, why one author addressed no reviewer comments directly and why two authors wrote no cover letter for their lists of responses cannot be determined from the corpus.

Tables 2-4 show the organization of the three different types of response letter.

TABLE 2. LETTER WITH RESPONSES TO REVIEWERS IN BODY

	ANGLOPHONE (N=5)	NON-ANGLOPHONE (N=3)
<b>Greeting</b>	5	3
<b>Opening</b>		
Statement of thanks		
For revise and resubmit decision	2	2
For editor and reviewer comments		1
Administrative		
Enclosures*	3	2
Revision activity	1	2
Identification of manuscript by title	4	2
Identification of journal	1	
<b>Response</b>		
Announce response	2	1
Explanation in relation to editor comments	1	1
Discussion of reviewer comments	5	
Agreement with reviewers	6	3
Disagreement with reviews	3	2
<b>Closing</b>		
Discussion of other business		
Improving figures		1
Other papers submitted	1	
Statement that paper is ready for publication	2	
Statement of hope that paper is ready for publication	3	2
Statement of thanks		
For revise and resubmit	1	1
For editor and reviewer comments	2	
Letter close	5	3

\* Note: All of the manuscripts were submitted in hard copy since electronic submission was not possible at the time.



TABLE 3. LETTER AND SEPARATE LIST OF COMMENTS INCLUDED  
(NO SUCH LETTERS FROM ANGLOPHONE INSTITUTIONS)

<b>Greeting</b>	1
Statement of thanks/gratitude	1
For revise and resubmit decision	1
For editor and/or reviewer comments	1
<b>Administrative</b>	
Statement regarding purpose	1
Enclosures*	1
Identification of manuscript by title	1
Identification of journal	1
<b>Closing</b>	
Statement of hope that paper is ready for publication	1
Statement of thanks	1
For revise and resubmit	1
Statement about further revision	1
Letter close	1

\* Note: All of the manuscripts were submitted in hard copy since electronic submission was not possible at the time.

TABLE 4. HYBRID

	ANGLOPHONE INSTITUTIONS (N=1)	NON-ANGLOPHONE INSTITUTIONS (N=3)
<b>Greeting</b>	1	3
<b>Opening</b>		
Statement of thanks		2
For revise and resubmit decision		2
For editor and reviewer comments		2
Identification of manuscript	1	3
Identification of journal		1
<b>Response</b>		
To editor		2
Simple changes	1	3
<b>Closing</b>		
Statement that paper is ready for publication		
Statement of hope that paper is ready for publication	1	1
Enclosure (reference to list)*	1	2
Letter close	1	2

\* Note: All of the manuscripts were submitted in hard copy since electronic submission was not possible at the time.



Based on the data available, it seems a typical ARR would look something like this.

Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your invitation to revise and resubmit our manuscript entitled PAPER TITLE. We have revised the paper in accordance with your comments and those of the reviewers. Specifically, we have done the following.

1. Explanation of how suggestion for revision was handled
2. Explanation of how suggestion for revision was handled
3. Explanation of how suggestion for revision was handled

(Alternatively: The changes are detailed in the separate list)

We hope that we have adequately addressed your concerns and that the paper is now ready for publication.

Sincerely,

Some tentative conclusions can be drawn from Tables 2-4 above. First, most authors include the titles of their papers in their ARRs. This, of course, is a great help to the editor as well as the original reviewers, who cannot be expected to remember which paper was written by a particular author, given the number of manuscripts they regularly deal with. Also, as indicated by Gosden ("Give" 11), an expression of thanks (either for the reviews themselves or the opportunity to revise and resubmit) seems to be part of professional etiquette. Interestingly, only one author, whose letter organization is given in Table 2, clearly indicated a willingness to make further changes to the manuscript, if necessary. Finally, disagreement with the reviewers is acceptable and will not prevent publication.

#### 4. RESPONSE STYLE

Authors fashioned their specific responses to review comments in a variety of ways. As shown in Table 5, few authors elected to respond separately to the editor's commentary, which was present in the editor's decision letter. All but one of the responses from an Anglophone institution, but none from non-Anglophone institutions, were mixed, meaning that some responses were directed at a specific reviewer, while others were not targeted. Authors from non-Anglophone institutions instead opted to respond to each reviewer separately or respond on no one in particular.

While responding separately to each reviewer and his or her comments may initially seem like a good strategy, in two cases this resulted in responses of over 10 pages (nearly as long as the submitted article) that failed to synthesize comments. For instance, in one case three reviewers raised the same question regarding the medical procedure. Rather than responding to this concern once, the author did so three times. This lack of synthesis resulted in a tedious, repetitive response.



TABLE 5. RESPONSE STYLE

	ANGLOPHONE SUBMISSIONS	NON-ANGLOPHONE SUBMISSIONS
Separate response clearly directed at editor's comments	1	2
Separate response to each reviewer's comments		5
Mixed Response (select responses to individual reviewer comments and responses not directed at any particular reviewer or the editor)	5	
No responses directed at any particular reviewer	1	5
Restatement of reviewer or editor request for change	2	4*
Percent of restatements in relation to total number of comments from all reviewers		
10% or fewer	2	2
approximately 50%		1
approximately 75%		1

\* In one paper all nine of one reviewer's comments were restated, but no comments from other reviewers.

Six of the sixteen authors opted to restate the concerns of the reviewers, a strategy which is quite helpful in clarifying what was changed and why. Restatement was reserved for issues that could not be resolved with a simple change such as questions regarding the interpretation of the results or the process of determining the severity of disease. In the restatements, the preferred approach was to reformulate the concern rather than to quote directly. For instance, if in the original review the reviewer stated that “the discussion is too long and wanders,” the author would write in the response, “Reviewer 2 thought that the discussion should be shortened and have a better focus.” Such reformulations are helpful in understanding how a suggested change was understood and how the manuscript was revised.

As Table 6 shows, the authors that restated chose the hedged performative verb *suggest*, as opposed to the more forceful *insist*, one-third of the time. Also used were cognitive verbs such as *believe*, *think*, and *wonder* in addition to reporting verbs.

Two of the six authors from Anglophone institutions and three of the ten from non- Anglophone institutions accepted all of the suggestions for change to their manuscript. As indicated in Table 7, the remaining authors rejected at least one suggestion; however, no author rejected more than three of the reviewer recommendations. All authors who responded to the reviewer comments complied with the editor's personal requests for revision, indicating that editor requests are typically not ignored.

Rejection of a recommendation, whether in an ARR or other kind of interaction, is not always easy. Given the importance of politeness in ARRs (Benfield and Feak), one might expect that authors would take pains to carefully explain why a recommendation was not taken up in the revision, perhaps following the last two of Leech's Maxims in doing so (32).

TABLE 6. RESTATEMENT STYLE

	ANGLOPHONE	NON-ANGLOPHONE
Reformulation	2	2
Quote		2
Verbs in restatement (author characterizations of reviewer comment)		
Believes	1	
Suggested	1	2
Thinks	2	
Mentioned		1
Stated		1
Wonders why		1

TABLE 7. REVISION ACTION TAKEN

	ANGLOPHONE	NON-ANGLOPHONE	TOTAL
Some suggestions rejected	4	7	11
Suggestions accepted*			
Clear indication that a change was made	6	7	13
Unclear indication that a change was made		2	2

\* Note: recall one author did not respond to comments, but merely submitted a revised manuscript. This author's letter is not included in the data here.

### Politeness: Leech's Maxims

- Tact maxim: minimize the imposition or the cost to the other;
- Generosity maxim: minimize the benefit to yourself (don't emphasize how much you will personally benefit);
- Approbation maxim: minimize dispraise (i.e. criticism) of others;
- Modesty maxim: minimize praise of self;
- Agreement maxim: minimize disagreement between self and others;
- Sympathy maxim: minimize antipathy (i.e. bad will) between self and others; pay attention to the hearer's interests, wants and needs

When rejecting a reviewer's recommendation, two of the authors from Anglophone institutions and four from non-Anglophone institutions restated the reviewer's comment before explaining why the change was not made. Explanations varied considerably.



- (1) Comment: *Further details on the surgical procedure should be provided.*

*Author response:* The reviewer is welcome to come and observe the procedure at our institute.

- (2) Comment: *VATS lobectomy does not necessarily offer better pulmonary function.*

*Author response:* We disagree.

- (3) Comment: *I would suggest some further discussion on the benefits of VATS.*

*Author response:* The advantages of VATS have been very well documented elsewhere. Such a discussion would add to the length of the paper, which reviewer 2 has suggested reducing. We have added one reference that explores the advantages, but have not changed the text otherwise.

- (4) Comment: *I do not see how the authors can conclude from the data that posterolateral thoracotomy should be avoided. Studies have shown that the procedure does not result in a greater number of post-operative complications.*

*Author response:* The reviewer has obviously misunderstood our point here. We do in fact state that there were no significant differences in the posterolateral thoracotomy group and the VATS group. We do, however, believe that overall VATS is a better procedure.

- (5) Comment: *A cost-benefit discussion would enhance the paper considerably.*

*Author response:* We agree that a discussion of cost-benefit would indeed be informative. Such information would allow others to better evaluate the benefits of the new procedure. However, such a discussion would really need to be undertaken in a separate paper given the scope of the issue. For our purposes here, then, we have added an algorithm that roughly provides a sense of the costs.

While an in-depth discussion of politeness is not possible here, it does seem that the author responses in examples 1-3 have violated Leech's maxims of agreement and sympathy. The response in example 4 could also be considered a violation of these same maxims because of the use of *obviously*, which portrays the reviewer in a negative light. Example 5, however, is noticeably different and may be viewed as a rather polite rejection since it first begins by agreeing with the reviewer and acknowledging the value of the suggestion. The use of *however* signals that the author may not comply, but at the end does offer a small revision in the direction suggested by the reviewer.

For some requests for change, it was unclear whether any change had been made. The unclear status of the request was generally associated with a particular



kind of reviewer comment — questions. Four of the authors from non-Anglophone institutions seemed to not recognize that reviewer questions were signals that a revision was necessary or being suggested. The authors answered the questions in their responses, but did not indicate that a change was made. For example, one reviewer asked, “were there any cases of prolonged air leak?” The author gave several paragraphs explaining why there were no cases, but, perhaps due to misinterpretation or inexperience, did not indicate whether this had been included in the paper. While the explanation is helpful, the reviewer likely expected the author to either add this information to the paper or explain why adding the explanation was unnecessary.

## 5. LANGUAGE OF THE RESPONSE

Since novice authors often have questions regarding sentence level aspects of their responses, I thought it would be worthwhile to look at some of these aspects of the ARR letters. For example, novice authors often have questions in terms of the use of I/we and tense. It was somewhat surprising to see that the ARRs from authors at Anglophone institutions were less likely than authors in non-Anglophone authors to use first person in their correspondence, as shown in Table 8. Another interesting difference between the two groups here has to do with verb forms. While the authors from Anglophone institutions had a strong preference for present and present perfect, those from non-Anglophone institutions tended more toward using present perfect and past. In terms of grammar or correctness, this difference does not matter, but it is interesting that the authors from Anglophone institutions clearly have a very “present” time orientation towards their texts and the publication process.

TABLE 8

	SUBMISSIONS FROM ANGLOPHONE INSTITUTIONS	SUBMISSION FROM NON ANGLOPHONE INSTITUTIONS
First person only in opening and close of cover letter	3	2
Response to reviewer comments		
First person used once or more	3	8
Voice		
Passive only	3	2
Mixed active/passive	3	10
Passive majority	0	4
Active majority	3	6
Verb tense and aspect		
Present	4	2
Present Perfect	6 (1 exclusively)	5
Past	2 (1 exclusively)	8 (3 exclusively)
Future		1
Linking As-Clauses	4 (used 2 or more times in each of the papers)	2 (one instance in each of the papers)



Finally, two of the six ARR from the authors chose a variety of verbs in detailing the manuscript revisions. The combined number of verbs totaled over 100. Interestingly, as shown in Tables 9 and 10 the authors from Anglophone institutions used fewer different verbs (15) than did those from non-Anglophone institutions (27 different verbs) and they used the verbs designating revision activity with greater frequency. Only four verbs were used by both groups (see Table 11).

TABLE 9. VERBS OF REVISION ACTIVITY

	ANGLOPHONE NUMBER OF USES
Added	6
Now included/included	5
Shortened	4
Altered	2
Corrected	2
Explained	2
Has been left	2
Removed	2
Now specify	2
Defined	1
Described	1
Now listed	1
Redone	1
Reduced	1
Summarized	1
TOTAL	33

Notes: No present tense; either past tense or present perfect, except for *specify* (We now specify the number...) and *include* (This information is now included).



TABLE 10. VERBS OF REVISION ACTIVITY

NON-ANGLOPHONE (N=10)	COUNTRY	SUBMISSIONS	NUMBER OF USES
Changed			25*
Added			17
Omitted			14
Revised			8
Shortened			7
Deleted			6
Rewrote			3
Corrected			2
Did not split			2
Will be written			2
Now Included/included			1
Removed			1
Discussed			1
Compared			1
Elected to omit			1
Simplified			1
Better identified			1
Addressed			1
Detailed			1
Eliminated			1
Further elaborated			1
Modified			1
Rephrased			1
Verified			1
Renamed			1
Reworked			1
TOTAL			77

Notes: No present tense; either past tense or present perfect.

\*One author used *changed* 17 times in the response.



TABLE 11. VERBS OF REVISION ACTIVITY USED BY BOTH GROUPS

	ANGLOPHONE	NON-ANGLOPHONE	TOTAL
	Number		
Added	6	17	23
Shortened	4	7	11
Now included/included	5	1	6
Removed	2	1	3

Notes: No present tense; either past tense or present perfect, except for *include* (This information is now included).

A categorization of the different verbs offers some insight into the nature of rewriting for publication as well as some suggestions for verb choices in writing an ARR.

- Verbs associated with writing and non-specific revision activity: address, alter, change, modify, redo, revise, rewrite, rephrase, rework.

*The discussion was revised in response to questions regarding choice of therapy.*

- Expansion: add, include, now listed.

*We have now included the discharge radiation instructions.*

- Reduction: shorten, remove, reduce, omit, elected to omit, delete, simplify, eliminate.

*The title has been shortened.*

- Clarification: explain, specify, define, describe, simplify, compare, better identify, discuss, further elaborate, detail, rename.

*We have explained the factors underlying poor pulmonary function.*

- Non-specific revision activity: alter, redo, change, modify, address.

*The tables have been modified to include the number of patients started on ETMV.*

- Verbs associated with no revision: leave (left), did not split.

*We have left all of the references.*





## 6. FINAL THOUGHTS

Given the size of the corpus used in this study, the results should be treated with caution, as they may not be generalizable to other contexts. Also, the categorization of ARR as those from Anglophone and those from non-Anglophone suggests a difference between authors whose first language is English and those who use English as an international language (EIL). One can surmise that in many cases submissions from non-Anglophone institutions are from EIL authors; however, it is equally possible that authors of papers from Anglophone countries use English as a second language. Another limitation is that the publication experience of the authors is unknown. It is likely that experience would have an effect on the shape of the ARR, with more experienced authors being more aware of the need for clarity regarding the changes in the manuscript or knowing that reviewer suggestions can be rejected. Nevertheless, some of the preliminary conclusions can offer some guidance to authors writing an ARR. The ARRs show that author responses are not arguments directed at proving the reviewers wrong. On the contrary, as demonstrated by many of the ARRs, they are more like polite discussion in which professionals can agree to disagree. As such, it is important for authors to recognize the need to attend to both the research content revisions that have been requested as well as the dialogue with the reviewers with whom they are interacting.

### WORKS CITED

- BELCHER, Diane D. "Seeking Acceptance in an English-Only Research World." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16 (2007): 1-22.
- BENFIELD, John and Christine FEAK. "Workshop: Corresponding with Reviewers and Editors." Annual Meeting of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons. Chicago, IL. January, 2005.
- CARGILL, Margaret and Patrick O'CONNOR. "Developing Chinese Scientists' Skills for Publishing in English: Evaluating Collaborating-Colleague Workshops Based on Genre Analysis." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 5 (2006): 207-221.
- DING, Huiling. "Genre Analysis of Personal Statements: Analysis of Moves in Application Essays to Medical and Dental Schools." *English for Specific Purposes* 26.3 (2007): 368-392.
- EMERALD GROUP PUBLISHING. "How to Survive Peer Review and Revise Your Paper: Part 4." <<http://info.emeraldinsight.com/authors/guides/review.htm?part=4>>.
- FORTANET, Inmaculada. "Evaluative Language in Peer Review Referee Reports." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 7 (2008): 27-37.
- GOSDEN, Hugh. "Thank You for Your Critical Comments and Helpful Suggestions': Compliance and Conflict in Authors' Replies to Referees' Comments in Peer Reviews of Scientific Research Papers." *IBÉRICA* 3 (2001): 3-17.
- GOSDEN, Hugh. "Why Not Give the Full Story?' Functions of Referees' Comments in Peer Reviews of Scientific Research Papers." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 2.2 (2003): 87-101.
- GREAVES, Sarah, Joanna SCOTT, Maxine CLARKE, Linda MILLER, Timo HANNAY, Annette THOMAS, and Philip CAMPBELL. "Overview: *Nature's* Trial of Open Peer Review." *Nature* (2006): n. pag. Web, 3 Apr. 2009. <<http://www.nature.com/nature/peerreview/debate/nature05535.html>>.



- HYON, Sunny. "Convention and Inventiveness in an Occluded Academic Genre: A Case Study of Retention-Promotion-Tenure Reports." *English for Specific Purposes* 27.2 (2008): 175-192.
- JACKSON, Susan. "Editorial Comments." *Academy of Management Review* 21 (1996) : 907-911.
- JEFFERSON, Tom, Elizabeth Wager, and Frank Davidoff. "Measuring the Quality of Editorial Peer Review." *JAMA*, 287.21 (2002): 2786-2790.
- JUSTICE, Amy, Mildred CHO, Margaret WINKER, Jesse A. BERLIN, Drummond RENNIE, and the PEER INVESTIGATORS. "Does Masking Author Identity Improve Peer Review Quality?" *JAMA* 280 (1998): 240-242.
- LEECH, Geoffrey. *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman, 1983.
- MILLER, Cass and Julianna HARRIS. "Scholarly Journal Publication: Conflicting Agendas for Scholars, Publishers, and Institutions." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* (January 2004): 73-91.
- MULLIGAN, Adrian. "Is Peer Review in Crisis?" *Oral Oncology* 41.2 (2004): 135-141.
- PRECHT, Kristen. "A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Letters of Recommendation." *English for Specific Purposes* 17.3 (1998): 241-265.
- SHUGAN, Steven. "The Editor's Secrets." *Marketing Science* 26 (2007): 589-595.
- SWALES, John. "Occluded Genres in the Academy." *Academic Writing: Intercultural and Textual Issues*. Ed. E. Ventola and A. Mauranen. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1996. 45-58.
- SWALES, John and Christine FEAK. *Abstracts and the Writing of Abstracts*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2009.



# LEARNING ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES: WHY CHINESE EFL LEARNERS FIND EAP SO DIFFICULT TO MASTER

David C.S. Li  
Hong Kong Institute of Education

## ABSTRACT

Greater China has the largest number of learners of English in the world, with English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as the target variety. Most of them have difficulty mastering EAP. This may be partly explained by tremendous typological/linguistic differences between English and Chinese, which belong to different language families and have hardly any features in common. Very little of Chinese learners' knowledge of their first language has any reference value in the process of learning English, the most important foreign language. This paper discusses some of the most salient typological differences and a few lexico-grammatical errors commonly found in Chinese EAP learners' language output.

KEY WORDS: EAP, language typology, Chinese learners, common errors.

## RESUMEN

El mayor número de estudiantes de Inglés para Fines Académicos (IFA) en el mundo se encuentra en la Gran China (Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwán y China continental). La mayoría de ellos suelen experimentar dificultades en el dominio del IFA debido, en parte, a las grandes diferencias tipológicas/lingüísticas entre las lenguas inglesa y china, las cuales pertenecen a dos familias de lenguas con escasas características en común. El conocimiento que los estudiantes chinos tienen de su lengua madre prácticamente no les sirve de referencia en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés, que constituye la lengua extranjera de mayor relevancia. En este artículo se describen algunas de las diferencias tipológicas más significativas que explican algunos de los errores léxico-gramaticales más comunes en la producción discursiva de los estudiantes chinos de IFA.

PALABRAS CLAVE: tipología de lenguas, estudiantes chinos, errores comunes.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has emerged as an international *lingua franca* (Jenkins; Kirkpatrick; Seidlhofer). It has accrued so much linguistic capital that young people growing up with little or no knowledge of Standard English tend to be disadvantaged relative to the goal of developing upward and outward mobility (Li, "Researching"). This is

why English figures so prominently in the curricula of ESL/EFL countries. “Greater China,” comprising mainland China, the two Special Administrative Regions Hong Kong and Macao, and Taiwan, has the largest number of learners of English in the world. According to one recent conference paper (Chen), there are about 112,463,000 primary school children in China. Based on this estimate, there should be no less than 300 million Chinese learners learning English at different levels of the education hierarchy today. Given the utility and perceived significance of English worldwide, there is understandably increasing pressure for local non-English-L1 governments to introduce English to learners at a younger age. In mainland China, for example, since 2001 English is a compulsory subject from Grade 3 (around age 8-9; Graddol 95), while in Hong Kong SAR, a former British colony, children start learning their ABC in kindergartens or playgroups (around age 4-5, see Li, “Chinese”; Miller and Li).

For reasons that hopefully will be made clear below, most Chinese learners of English find it very difficult to learn English up to a high level. At every stage of the learning process, their English output is full of non-standard features or deviations from Standard English, at both phonological (see e.g. Hung) and lexico-grammatical levels (see e.g. Li and Chan, “Helping”, “Form-Focused”). In this paper, we will discuss the main linguistic factors related to various acquisitional problems encountered by Chinese EFL learners, especially those who have relatively little home support for extending their English input learned in class. We will use a contrastive approach to elucidate the enormous typological and linguistic differences between the two most widely spoken languages in the world: Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua and Cantonese, among other Chinese varieties) and English (different varieties of English, including English for Academic Purposes, or EAP in short). Owing to space constraints, we will limit ourselves to the following features, in that order:

- Some salient typological differences between English (Indo-European) and Chinese (Sino-Tibetan).
- Deviation from EAP 1: Using an independent clause as the subject of a longer clause.
- Deviation from EAP 2: Pseudo-tough movement (*I am difficult to learn English*).
- Deviation from EAP 3: Non-standard Q-A sequence involving ‘negative yes-no questions’.
- Subject-prominence (English) vs. topic-prominence (Chinese).
- Writing systems: alphabetic (English) vs. logographic (Chinese).

Apart from typological and linguistic factors, a lack of a conducive English-learning environment is another important factor behind various acquisitional problems. Being essentially a foreign language in Greater China, English is seldom used among Chinese speakers for intraethnic communication, unlike Chinese Singaporeans in this regard (for more details, see Li, “Improving”).



## 2. SOME SALIENT TYPOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH (INDO-EUROPEAN) AND CHINESE (SINO-TIBETAN)

Typologically speaking, English and Chinese belong to two completely unrelated language families (see e.g. Gordon; <[http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno\\_docs/distribution.asp?by=family](http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=family)>), which is why linguistically the two languages have very little in common. English is a Germanic language within the Indo-European family, alongside other “family members” such as Dutch, German, and Scandinavian languages like Norwegian, Danish and Swedish. Learners of English from a language in the Romance family —notably French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian— may also benefit from a large number of cognates in their respective first language. Thus French learners of English will quickly realize that most of the English words ending in *-tion* are also recognizable French words (e.g. *civilisation*, *formation*, *function*, *nation*, etc.). Despite a minor concern called “false cognates” (also “false friends”; cf. French: *faux amis*; German: *falsche Freunde*), the presence of a large number of similar-sounding words in English is a great help in the process of acquiring vocabulary in English. Such a benefit, however, is unknown to Chinese EFL learners for, except a small subset of lexical borrowings originated from English, little of what they know about their own mother tongue is of any reference value in the process of acquiring Standard English / EAP. At the level of grammar, the two branches of Indo-European, Germanic and Romance, share many linguistic features in common. For example, they all have an alphabet, a tense system, and they all distinguish between singular nouns and plural nouns —the grammatical category called “Number.” None of these features are shared by Chinese, which is typologically a Sino-Tibetan language. Other Sino-Tibetan languages include Burmese, Tibetan and Thai.

For Chinese learners, many of the EFL learning difficulties may be accounted for by the great ‘typological distance’ between Chinese and English. In principle, the more linguistic features shared by the two languages in question, the easier it would be for native speakers of either language to learn the other language. For instance, French learners of English will find in the tense system of French a convenient frame of reference when they try to make sense of various tenses in English. Very much the same advantage is also enjoyed by English-speaking learners of French. Such an advantage is however not available to learners whose first language is Chinese. Except for the basic word order SVO, as semiotic meaning-making systems the two languages Chinese (in particular the national language Putonghua/Mandarin and other “dialects” such as Cantonese, the *lingua franca* of Hong Kong and Macao, and Southern Min, its counterpart in Taiwan) and English (native or non-native varieties, including Standard English or EAP) have practically no other linguistic features in common. Table 1 shows some of the most salient examples of mismatch in the grammatical subsystems of the two languages, and the learning difficulties and typical non-standard EFL features associated with them.



TABLE 1. SALIENT EXAMPLES OF MISMATCH IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE GRAMMATICAL SUBSYSTEMS

GRAMMATICAL SUBSYSTEM	STANDARD ENGLISH (EAP): FORMS AND FUNCTIONS	CHINESE (MANDARIN): FORMS AND FUNCTIONS	EFL LEARNING DIFFICULTIES/NON-STANDARD EFL FEATURES
Word class: Nouns	Grammatical category 'Number': singular/plural	No such distinction	Omitting the plural marker <i>-s</i>
Word class: Verbs	Grammatical category 'Tense' 1. past tenses/ present tenses 2. S-V agreement	No such distinction	1. Omitting the '3rd person singular' <i>-s</i> 2. Omitting S-V agreement
Word class: Adjectives	<i>-ing</i> vs. <i>-ed</i> adjectives	No such systematic distinction	Confusion between meanings of <i>-ing</i> and <i>-ed</i> adjectives
Articles	<i>a, an, the</i> : expressing generic/definite/indefinite reference	No such grammatical category	Difficulty acquiring the functions of articles
Relative clauses	Post-modifying, appearing <u>after</u> an NP; giving additional info about the Head	Pre-modifying clause <u>before</u> an NP; giving additional info about the Head	Underuse of relative clauses and other post-modifying elements of the Head noun
Typical sentence structure	Subject-prominent (S-P; see below)	Topic-prominent (T-C; see below)	Using the T-C structure to package info, e.g. <i>This field, grow rice is best.</i>
Conditional statements	Three conditionals: 1. If I have time, I'll come. 2. If I had time, I'd come 3. If I'd had time, I'd have come.	No such grammatical distinction (disambiguation through contextual cues): 1. (Ruguo) you sijian wo (jiao) hui lai [(如果)有時間我(就)會來]	1. Difficulty acquiring the 3 <sup>rd</sup> /'counterfactual' conditional 2. Difficulty distinguishing the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> conditional
Usage of the adverb /intensifier <i>too</i>	The structure 'too Adj to V', e.g. 1. <i>This is too good to be true.</i> (= so good that it cannot be true) 2. You are too young to get married. (= so young that you should <u>not</u> get married)	The corresponding adverb / intensifier <i>tai / taai</i> <sup>33</sup> (太) has no implicit negative meaning as in <i>too</i> in the 'too Adj to V' structure	1. ? <i>Your shoes are too good for me.</i> (meaning '...so good...') 2. ? <i>I'm too excited to meet your parents.</i> (meaning '...so excited...')

One inevitable consequence is that native speakers of either language who want to learn the other language tend to experience enormous cognitive difficulties. This helps explain why, for example, the English tense system (e.g. subject-verb agreement; the functional difference between the past tense and present perfect) is among the thorniest problems for Chinese learners of English. In a similar vein, many Westerners have tremendous difficulties mastering the tone system in Mandarin (Putonghua) or, worse still, Cantonese, mainly because tonal distinctions or tonemes (four in Mandarin, six in Cantonese) as an integrated part of lexis for differentiating word meanings are alien to speakers of most of the Indo-European languages.



At the level of phonology, Chinese EFL learners tend to have difficulties articulating words containing one or more consonant clusters (e.g. *strengths*: [streK<sub>s</sub>]), partly because such a feature is uncommon in Chinese (not found in Mandarin or Cantonese). Unstressed, word-final syllables may be omitted (e.g. *complicated* or *updated*), while syllable-final plosives may be unreleased (e.g. *tap*, *pet* and *look*), largely because unlike syllable-final plosives in English, their Cantonese counterparts are not released (e.g. /t/ in faat<sup>33</sup>daat<sup>22</sup>, 發達 ‘get rich’). Further, the phonemic distinction between syllable-initial /n/ and /l/ in English is often undifferentiated by Cantonese-L1 (but less typically Mandarin-L1) learners of English, with /n/ being pronounced as /l/. Consequently, minimal pairs like *line* – *nine* and *knife* – *life* are indistinguishable and tend to be pronounced with /l/. This may be explained by the fact that, in Cantonese, /n/ and /l/ are treated as variants with no risk of miscommunication (e.g. the 2sg personal pronoun 你 is variously pronounced as nei<sup>23</sup> or lei<sup>23</sup>). Finally, another well-known phonological feature among Chinese learners’ speech output is “syllable-timed” rhythm which is so characteristic of Cantonese phonology. For instance, in a polysyllabic word like *international*, each of the syllables is typically given the same amount of stress, viz. in-ter-na-tional, rather than a sequence of five syllables with stress falling on the third syllable only (see Hung for more details).

In the rest of this paper, we will discuss and illustrate three of the high-frequency non-standard lexico-grammatical features in Chinese learners’ EAP outputs (more written than spoken). All of these features are arguably due, at least in part, to cross-linguistic influence from the learner’s mother tongue, which in the case of Hong Kong and the adjacent Guangdong province refers to spoken Cantonese (the vernacular) and (standard) written Chinese. Statistically, however, there are far more Chinese EFL learners whose mother tongue is Putonghua (Mandarin), the national language. Cantonese and Mandarin represent two of the seven major ‘dialect’ groups in Greater China (Li, “Chinese”). In this paper we will draw on both of these Chinese varieties for illustration. All Chinese examples will be cited in an appropriate transliteration system as well as in Chinese characters. Cantonese examples will be transcribed using the JyutPing system pioneered by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong (LSHK). The tone contour of a Cantonese morpho-syllable is indicated by two numbers in superscript. Mandarin examples will be transcribed using Pinyin.

### 3. DEVIATION FROM EAP 1: USING AN INDEPENDENT CLAUSE AS THE SUBJECT OF A LONGER CLAUSE

The verb group in an English clause may be simple (e.g. *We like it*) or complex (e.g. *He could have arrived earlier; I would like to make some changes*). When there is more than one verb in the same clause, the first verb will appear in finite form (marked for tense and, if present tense, number and person as well), while the other verbs should appear in non-finite form (e.g. infinitive: *I can help distribute this questionnaire for you*; past participle or present participle: *I have been doing this*



for years). This is why in examples (1)-(4) below, all the verbs (*applied, objected*) and adjectives (*eager, willing*) have to be converted to nouns (1a-4a) or gerunds (5-7) when they themselves function as the subject of a longer sentence. Compare:

- (1) Jack applied for this job.
  - (2) Jim objected to your plan.
  - (3) Mary was eager to quit.
  - (4) John was willing to stay.
- 
- (1a) Jack's application for this job was successful.
  - (2a) Jim's objection / objecting to your plan was totally ungrounded.
  - (3a) Mary's eagerness to quit embarrassed her boss.
  - (4a) John's willingness to stay surprised us all.
- 
- (5) Thank you for coming...
  - (6) Jim apologized for being late...
  - (7) Ann's handling of the complaint is very reasonable...

When a finite, independent clause itself becomes the subject or object of a longer sentence, it is necessary to head this clause with the subordinator *that* (cf. *que* in French; *dass* in German). The resultant dependent 'that clause' may similarly function as the subject of a longer clause (1b-4b):<sup>1</sup>

- (1b) *That Jack applied for this job* was successful.
- (2b) *That Jim objected to your plan* was totally ungrounded.
- (3b) *That Mary was eager to quit* embarrassed her boss.
- (4b) *That John was willing to stay* surprised us all.

Failing to mark the finite-clause subject as a dependent 'that clause' using the subordinator *that* as in (1b)-(4b) will result in non-standard sentences, as in (1c)-(4c) (Chan, Kwan and Li):

- (1c) \**Jack applied for this job* was successful.
- (2c) \**Jim objected to your plan* was totally ungrounded.
- (3c) \**Mary was eager to quit* embarrassed her boss.
- (4c) \**John was willing to stay* surprised us all.

The syntactic requirement or constraint for using an independent clause as the subject of a longer clause is often overlooked by even advanced Chinese EFL

---

<sup>1</sup> Notice that the same "that clause" may also function as the object of a longer clause. For example: I know (*that*) *Jack applied for this job*; I was told *that Jim objected to your plan*; I was surprised *that Mary was eager to quit*; I was relieved to hear *that John was willing to stay*.



learners. This is partly because there is little *formal* restriction when Chinese verbs are chained together to express a sequence of processes. Such a feature is generally known as ‘serial-verb construction’. In other words, the chaining of verbs in Chinese is much freer in that no inflectional change is required (cf. finite vs. non-finite verb forms in English). The following utterance in Cantonese (8), involving no less than a sequence of eight verbs (highlighted), is commonplace in everyday communication in any Chinese variety:

(8) ngo<sup>23</sup> **soeng**<sup>35</sup> **lok**<sup>22</sup> gaai<sup>55</sup> **maai**<sup>35</sup> coi<sup>33</sup> **faan**<sup>55</sup> **lai**<sup>21</sup> **zyu**<sup>35</sup> faan<sup>22</sup> bei<sup>35</sup> nei<sup>23</sup> **sik**<sup>22</sup> jyun<sup>21</sup> zi<sup>33</sup> **heoi**<sup>33</sup> **faan**<sup>55</sup> **gung**<sup>55</sup>

[我想落街買菜返黎煮飯俾你食完至去返工]

Isg want go-down-street buy-food come-back cook-meal give you eat-finish then go-to-work

[Literally] ‘I want to go (down the street to) buy food and come back to cook the meal for you to eat till [you] finish then [you] go to work.’

[More idiomatically] ‘I want to go and buy some food now. When I come back, I’ll fix the meal for you. Don’t go until you have finished eating.’

Notice that the more idiomatic-sounding English rendition of (8) would have the verb processes expressed in separate clauses rather than in one serial verb construction as in Chinese. This Cantonese utterance, which contains a serial verb construction, sounds not at all unnatural. Notice how the verbs in Chinese are sequenced together freely without inflection (compare: *to*-infinitive, *-ing* forms, *-ed* forms, etc. in English). Due to cross-linguistic influence, it is conceivable that Chinese EFL learners are tempted to sequence English verbs together, paying no attention to inflectional changes when putting verbs together in a sequence. This helps explain the misuse of an independent clause as the subject of a sentence (e.g. 1c-4c; Chan, Kwan and Li). Such a trend is even more apparent in elementary Chinese learners’ EFL output, where the common feature of verb-chaining is often mapped directly onto English verbs, showing little or no awareness of the normative non-finite English verb forms, as in the following:

\*They want me go.      \*We like play football.      \*She enjoy watch Twins.

#### 4. DEVIATION FROM EAP 2: PSEUDO-TOUGH MOVEMENT (I AM DIFFICULT TO LEARN ENGLISH)

There are a number of sentence structures in English which are difficult for Chinese EFL learners to master. ‘Postponed carrier’ is one of them (see Lock). This term is used to characterize a sentence pattern headed by the anticipatory ‘it’ such as the following:

- (9) It is difficult for us to go to Tibet by bus.
- (10) It is not convenient for us to tell you the names of our clients.



From the point of view of syntactic function, the ‘real’ subject in these sentences is ‘postponed’ in accordance with a general trend in modern English, namely, to defer lengthy preverbal subjects to the post-verbal position, usually toward the end of the sentence. Then, in place of the ‘real’ subject, a “dummy subject”—the pronoun *it*—is used instead in the subject position. It is of course possible to package the same message using the real subject, but the resultant structure, as shown in (9a) and (10a), would sound less idiomatic:

- (9a) For us to go to Tibet by bus is difficult.  
 (10a) For us to tell you the name of our guest is not convenient.

Typical adjectives involved in this sentence pattern are those expressing a degree of facility or potentiality such as *easy, difficult, necessary, common, convenient, possible, probable, impossible*, etc. (see *Collins CoBuild English Grammar*). In addition to the complexity of the ‘postponed carrier’ structure, another source of learning difficulty is probably due to the fact that, to express the same meaning in Chinese, the sentence would typically start with a human subject. For example:

- (9b) wǒmén hǎn nán zuò bāsi dào Xīzàng qù  
 (我們很難坐巴士到西藏去)  
 1pl very difficult take bus to Tibet go  
 ‘It is very difficult for us to go to Tibet by bus.’

- (10b) wǒmén bù fāngbiàn bǎ kèrén de míngzi gàosu nǐ  
 (我們不方便把客人的名字告訴你)  
 1pl not convenient BA guest’s name tell you  
 ‘It is inconvenient for us to tell you the name of our guest.’

The Cantonese counterparts in (9b) and (10b) would look very similar. Consequently, elementary Chinese EFL learners tend to produce erroneous sentences which mirror the normative, correct structure of the Chinese sentence, viz.:

- (9c) \*We are difficult to go to Tibet by bus.  
 (10c) \*We are not convenient to tell you the name of our guest.

Such a structure has been characterized as ‘pseudo-tough movement’ (Yip; cf. Li and Chan, “Form-Focused”). In addition, the student may have been misled by grammatical English sentences such as (11) and (12), which carry a very similar surface structure as that of the ungrammatical sentences in (9c) and (10c):

- (11) Jim is not easy to convince [...].  
 (12) Madeleine is difficult to find [...].

Chinese EFL learners who get confused fail to realize that in such grammatical sentences, the subject noun (e.g. *Jim* and *Madeleine*) is at the same time the



underlying object of the main verb, that is, in response to the questions: to convince whom? (Jim); to find whom? (Madeleine). It takes very keen learners to observe the transformational relationship that exists between these grammatical sentences which begin with a human subject, as in (11) and (12), and those headed by the anticipatory “dummy *it*,” as in (11a) and (12a):

(11a) It is not easy to convince Jim.

(12a) It is difficult to find Madeleine.

Notice, however, that no such transformational relationship exists in (9) and (9a) involving the intransitive verb *go*, nor in (10) and (10a) involving the ditransitive verb *tell*. Based on the above contrastive analysis, it may be argued that the erroneous ‘pseudo-tough movement’ structure (Yip), as exemplified in (9c) and (10c), is jointly attributable to a combination of cross-linguistic influence from the students’ mother tongue, Chinese, and the structural complexity of the “postponed carrier” structure in the target language, English (Li and Chan, “Form-Focused”; see also <<http://personal.cityu.edu.hk/~encrproj/>>).

### 5. DEVIATION FROM EAP 3: NON-STANDARD Q-A SEQUENCE INVOLVING “NEGATIVE YES-NO QUESTIONS”

In the middle of an English test, I saw one student asking his buddy seated in front of him to pick up a pen that he had dropped accidentally. I went over to that student and asked jokingly: “You’re not cheating, are you?” I was expecting the simple answer “No,” but to my surprise, that student responded “Yes,” which made me unsure for a moment whether he was in fact cheating. According to the grammar of Standard English or EAP, that student’s response amounted to admitting to cheating (“Yes, I am cheating”). But other contextual cues, including the student’s facial expression, suggested that somehow this was not what he was trying to say. This little incident epitomizes one interesting problem concerning the proper way of responding to a “negative yes-no question” in English. A negative yes-no question is one that anticipates a “yes” or “no” response, and which contains an element of negation, typically “no” or “not” in the main clause before the question tag, as in the example, “You’re not cheating, are you?”

The Q-A sequence is among the most common conversational features in any language. The preferred patterns of responses to negative yes-no questions, however, differ considerably in Chinese and English. To understand how the two systems differ, consider the following contrastive examples in Standard English and Mandarin/Putonghua:

- (13) A – You don’t drive, do you? / right?  
Bi – No(, I don’t).  
Bii – Yes(, I do).



- (14) A – nǐ shì bù kāi chē de, duì ma? [你是不開車的, 對嗎]  
 2sg BE not drive car, right?  
 ‘You don’t drive, do you?’  
 Bi – shì / duì (wǒ shì bù kāi chē de). [是/對 (我是不開車的)。]  
 ‘Yes (you are right; I don’t drive).’  
 Bii – bùshì / bùduì (wǒ shì kāi chē de) [(不是/不對, 我是開車的)。]  
 ‘No (you are wrong; I do drive).’

As shown in (13) and (14), in response to a negative yes-no question, English requires the respondent to attend to the proposition (here: “I drive”), and affirm it with “yes,” and deny it with “no.” In the Mandarin response to a negative yes-no question, however, the choice between positive and negative polarity hinges upon whether the questioner’s supposition is agreeable to the respondent. If it is agreeable, the respondent should say “yes” (shì/duì), with the implicit meaning “you are right”; if the supposition is invalid, then the respondent should say “no” (bùshì/bùduì), suggesting implicitly “you are wrong.” Given that the meanings assigned to responses to negative yes-no questions in Mandarin and English are diametrically opposed to each other, it is not difficult to understand why Chinese EFL learners find it so difficult to adjust to the pattern of Q-A sequence in English, and that ambiguous responses from fluent Chinese EFL users such as (15) and (16) are not at all rare:

- (15) A – You’re not cheating, are you?  
 Bi – Yes(, I’m not cheating).  
 Bii – No(, I’m cheating).  
 (16) A – You don’t smoke, do you?  
 Bi – Yes(, I don’t).  
 Bii – No(, I do).

To avoid misunderstanding, it is advisable for native-speakers of English who are unaccustomed to the Q-A sequence involving negative yes-no questions in Chinese to be vigilant about the possibility of their Chinese interlocutors operating with the Chinese Q-A sequence subsystem. Where the Standard English Q-A subsystem governing responses to negative yes-no questions is upheld to be the norm (e.g. in high-stake gate-keeping encounters such as oral exams and job interviews), it is not difficult to understand why ‘inappropriate’ responses to negative yes-no questions are among the most common features or “errors” in Chinese EFL users’ English outputs, including those whose proficiency level is quite high.

## 6. SUBJECT-PROMINENCE VS. TOPIC-PROMINENCE

There is general consensus among Chinese grammarians that the important concept in English grammar —the subject— is not so useful when analyzing



the syntactic functions of constituents in a Chinese sentence (Li and Thompson). There are two main types of evidence for this. First, the subject is not a salient grammatical category in Chinese, as shown in many “subjectless” sentences such as *xiayu le!* [下雨了] or *lok<sup>22</sup> jyu<sup>23</sup> laa<sup>33</sup>!* [落雨啦] (“it rains/it is raining”). Second, in plenty of sentences it is inappropriate to analyze the sentence-initial constituent as the subject, even though a subject may be identified elsewhere in the sentence. For example:

- (17) ze kuài tián zhòng mǐ zuìhǎo [這塊田種米最好]  
 this field grow rice the best  
 ‘This field is best for growing rice.’
- (18) gaa<sup>33</sup>fe<sup>55</sup> ngo<sup>23</sup> zung<sup>55</sup>ji<sup>33</sup> baa<sup>55</sup>sai<sup>55</sup> ge<sup>33</sup> [咖啡我鍾意巴西嘅]  
 coffee 1sg like Brazil NOM  
 ‘As for coffee, I like Brazilian (coffee)!’
- (19) san<sup>55</sup>cing<sup>35</sup> zoeng<sup>55</sup>hok<sup>22</sup>gam<sup>55</sup> gam<sup>55</sup>jat<sup>22</sup> zit<sup>22</sup>zi<sup>23</sup> laa<sup>33</sup>  
 [申請獎學金今日截止啦!]  
 apply scholarship today deadline FP  
 [Literally] Applying for scholarships, today is the deadline!  
 [More idiomatically] “Today is the deadline for scholarship applications!”

What (17), (18) and (19) have in common is that each of the sentence-initial constituents (i.e. “this field,” “coffee,” “apply for scholarship”) provides the frame of reference (cf. theme) for interpreting the meanings of the constituents in the rest of the sentence (cf. rheme). To account for the semantic role of such sentence-initial constituents in Chinese, some grammarians coined the term “topic.” This is the background against which Chinese is often referred to as a “topic-prominent language” (Li and Thompson), as opposed to “subject-prominent languages” such as English, French and German, where the subject has been grammaticalized (i.e. the preverbal subject position must be filled by a ‘dummy subject’ if there is no naturally occurring subject, as in *it is raining/il pleut/es regnet*). To sum up, unlike the ‘subject—predicate’ (S-P) syntactic analysis in English, it is believed that “topic—comment” (T-C) is a more productive analytical apparatus for a language like Chinese. Such a significant typological difference between English and Chinese—subject-prominence vs. topic-prominence—helps explain why elementary Chinese EFL learners tend to produce non-standard or unidiomatic sentences such as the following:

- (17a) \* This field, grow rice is best!  
 (18a) ?? Coffee, I like Brazilian coffee!  
 (19a) ?? Applying scholarship, today is deadline!



## 7. WRITING SYSTEMS: ALPHABETIC (ENGLISH) VS. LOGOGRAPHIC (CHINESE)

In EFL settings, the bulk of the learning of English takes place through reading. English is an alphabetic language; the phonetically based spelling system, while imperfect, makes it possible for English speakers to pronounce a given English word regardless of its length, including vocabulary words that learners have never encountered before. Thus the meaning of a long English word such as *anti-establishmentarianism* may be unfamiliar to the reader, but based on his or her knowledge of English pronunciation rules, the reader will probably have little difficulty spelling and pronouncing it correctly.

In contrast, Chinese adopts a logographic writing system. The basic unit of writing is known as a “character” (fāngkuàizì, 方块字), or written graph. While experienced readers of Chinese will be able to infer how an unfamiliar Chinese character is likely to be pronounced —thanks to the dominant character formation principle called “phonetic compound” (xíngshēngzì, 形声字)— the Chinese character, being logographic rather than alphabetic, offers no clue as to how it is actually pronounced for, unlike the English letter, the phonetic property of the Chinese character is not based on phonemic sound values. Rather, the pronunciation has to be learnt and memorized along with its written form and meaning(s). One consequence of this indirect sound-graph relationship is that when a Chinese character is not used for a long time, it tends to become cognitively obscure, and the speaker may have difficulties recalling its actual written form (Li, “Chinese”).

Of interest here is the fact that knowledge of the Chinese writing system is of little help or relevance in EFL learners’ struggle to make sense of the complex sound-spelling relationships in English. Quite the contrary, in the absence of training and practice in phonics in English lessons, Chinese EFL learners tend to commit long English words to memory through rote learning, in the same way that they are encouraged to memorize the written forms of Chinese characters through practice. This was also my experience when I was in Primary (Grade) 5 or 6; I still remember reciting “t-e-r-r-i-t-o-r-y, ter-ri-to-ry” on my way home from school, being anxious of the dictation of an English passage related to “New Territories” (the northern part of Hong Kong) the following day. A lack of ‘alphabetic awareness’ is thus one important reason why advocates of phonics feel so strongly that it should be introduced as early as possible into the EFL curricula.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Owing to tremendous typological and linguistic differences between Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua, among other Chinese “dialects”) and English (notably Standard English or EAP), Chinese EFL learners tend to find it difficult to learn English up to a high proficiency level. Acquisitional problems occur at practically all linguistic levels: phonological, lexico-grammatical and discourse-pragmatic. In this paper, we have discussed and illustrated several salient learning difficulties at



the lexico-grammatical level, including the misuse of an independent clause as the subject of a longer clause (e.g. \**Snoopy is leaving makes me happy*), ‘pseudo-tough movement’ (e.g. \**I am difficult to learn English*), and ‘non-standard Q-A sequence involving ‘negative yes-no questions’ (e.g. ??*Yes, I don’t smoke*). We also saw that under the influence of topic-prominence in their first language, Chinese EFL learners tend to find it difficult to acquire the typical subject-predicate structure in English, as shown in the omission of the ‘dummy subject *it*’, or unidiomatic sentences bearing a topic-prominent structure in their English output (e.g. \**This field, grow rice is best!*). Finally, we have seen how the logographic writing system in the learners’ first language, Chinese, is of little reference value in the process of developing literacy in English, which is written with an alphabetic script. All this helps explain why, for the majority of Chinese EFL learners who have little home support and few opportunities to practice using the target language, mastering English (Standard English or EAP) up to a high level is such a daunting task despite years of hard work.

## WORKS CITED

- CHAN, Alice Y.W., Becky S.C. KWAN and David C.S. LI. “Tackling the ‘Independent Clause as Subject’ Problem.” *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching* 13 (2003): 107-117.
- CHEN, Lin. “Primary School English Education in China.” Paper presented at the International Conference on Primary English, Beijing, China, October 18-20, 2008. 14 May 2009. <<http://www.21stcentury.com.cn/story/46180.html>>.
- Collins COBUILD English Grammar*. London: Collins, 1990.
- GORDON, Raymond G., Jr. ed. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Dallas: SIL International, 2005. 2 May 2009 <[http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno\\_docs/distribution.asp?by=family](http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=family)>.
- GRADDOL, David. *English Next*. London: British Council, 2006.
- HUNG, Tony T.N. “Towards a Phonology of Hong Kong English.” *World Englishes* 19.3 (2000): 337-356.
- JENKINS, Jennifer. *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.
- KIRKPATRICK, Andy. *World Englishes: Implications for International Communication and English Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.
- LI, Charles and Sandra A. THOMPSON. *Mandarin Chinese: A Functional Reference Grammar*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1981.
- LI, David C.S. “Chinese as a Lingua Franca in Greater China.” *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 26 (2006): 149-176.
- “The Functions and Status of English in Hong Kong: A Post-1997 Update.” *English World-Wide* 20.1 (1999): 67-110.
- “Improving the Standards and Promoting the Use of English in Hong Kong: Issues, Problems and Prospects.” *English Language Use and Education across Greater China*. Ed. A.W. Feng, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. [Forthcoming].
- “Researching and Teaching China and Hong Kong English: Issues, Problems and Prospects.” *English Today* 23.3-4 (2007): 11-17.



- LI, David C.S. and Alice Y.W. CHAN. "Form-Focused Negative Feedback: Correcting "Three Common Errors"." *TESL Reporter* 34.1 (2001): 22-34.
- "Helping Teachers Correct Structural and Lexical English Errors." *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4.1 (1999): 79-101.
- LOCK, Graham. *Functional English Grammar: An Introduction for Second Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- MILLER, Lindsay and David C.S. LI. "Innovations in ELT Curricula and Strategies of Implementation in Hong Kong SAR." *ELT Curriculum Innovation and Implementation in Asia*. Ed. Y.H. Choi and B. Spolsky. Seoul: Asia-TEFL, 2008. 71-100.
- SEIDLHOFER, Barbara. "Research Perspectives on Teaching English as a Lingua Franca." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 24 (2004): 209-239.
- YIP, Virginia. *Interlanguage and Learnability: From Chinese to English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995.





# “DIALOGGING”: A SOCIAL INTERACTIVE PRACTICE IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Nancy Lea Eik-Nes

Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet

## ABSTRACT

This study of the practice of writing logs as part of an academic writing course examined the linguistic markers of interaction that characterize the texts of the logs. Based on Hyland's model of interaction in academic discourse, the texts were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively in order to describe the types and extent of interaction that were evident in the text. The results of the study indicate a high level of interaction and imply that the practice of writing logs—and especially writing “e-logs”—may well be considered as a forum for dialogue and meaning-making through writing.

KEY WORDS: Academic writing, log writing, linguistic markers of interaction, dialogue.

## RESUMEN

Este estudio sobre la práctica de la escritura de *logs* como parte de un curso de escritura académica examina los indicadores lingüísticos de interacción que caracterizan a los textos de los *logs*. Basándonos en el modelo de interacción en el discurso académico de Hyland, analizamos los textos de forma tanto cuantitativa como cualitativa con el propósito de describir los tipos y el grado de interacción manifiestos en ellos. Los resultados del estudio señalan la existencia de un alto grado de interacción e implican que la práctica de escribir *logs*—y en particular la escritura de “*e-logs*”—bien podría considerarse como un foro para el diálogo y la aclaración de dudas a través de la escritura.

PALABRAS CLAVE: escritura académica, escritura de *logs*, indicadores lingüísticos de interacción, diálogo.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In a scientific writing course for doctoral students in engineering, students were asked to submit weekly logs in the form of e-mails. One student concluded his fourth log like this:

- (1) *I have to say that these logbooks have [...] helped me to structure my thoughts, and though I probably still seem both quite vague and confused, it was actually much worse one month ago...* (Brian)



The idea that a doctoral student is feeling vague and confused is perhaps not so noteworthy as Brian's claim that he regarded himself as less vague and confused now than he was a month ago, and that writing weekly logs had facilitated this development.

The field of academic writing has emerged out of a range of theories and practices concerning how students learn to write and how writing should be taught. A relatively recent view of writing education has been through an academic literacies perspective where the focus, put simply, is on the development of the student rather than on the development of the text (Lea and Street, "Staff"; Lillis; Lea and Street, "Academic"; Lillis and Scott). An academic literacies approach regards learning as a transformative process that takes place as students draw upon their own resources and experience to adjust and make meaning as they encounter new situations in their education. In academic literacies, the concern is with the epistemological aspects of academic practices rather than the surface features of a text. For the students, then, the focus is on negotiating their identities with their disciplines for which writing is an important aspect.

The study presented in this paper is part of a larger study that examined how writing logs, particularly e-logs, can be a factor in students' negotiation and development of their disciplinary identities (Eik-Nes). The larger study considered logs as a forum for dialogue (hence the term "dialogging"). While writing logs, students carried on dialogues with themselves, with their teacher and with their disciplines; they used these dialogues to discuss, challenge and reflect upon their identities in a way that might facilitate the development of their disciplinary identities (ibid.). In order to give credibility to the claim that dialogue actually took place, it was necessary to identify textual signs of subjective interaction in the logs.

Studies of texts have increasingly focused on the social context of language and the writers' subjective positioning of themselves in their texts (see, for example, Labov; Biber and Finegan; Bucholtz and Hall). Writers use words of evaluation to position both themselves and those with whom they interact through their texts (Hunston and Thompson; Biber). Hyland identified and quantified linguistic markers of academic interaction in research articles to demonstrate how scientific writers purposefully use linguistic interaction to "acknowledge, construct and negotiate social relations" and to position themselves and gain acceptance for their argumentation in scientific discourse (Hyland, "Stance") (see also Hyland, "Author", *Hedging*, "Bringing", *Disciplinary*, *Metadiscourse*).

The purpose of this study was to identify what characterizes linguistic interaction in student logs. It uses Hyland's model of interaction in academic discourse as a starting point to describe the kinds and relative degree of interaction that can be observed in the logs.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The setting for the study was a 12-week course in scientific publication offered to doctoral students in engineering at the Norwegian University of Science



and Technology. For all but one of the students, English was an additional language. The course was taught in English and all assignments were in English. Materials for the course were texts that the students selected from their own reading for their doctoral projects, so that the students read, analyzed and wrote scientific articles in their own field of study.

In addition to their more formal assignments, students were asked to write logs for about 10 minutes each week, and submit them to their teacher. Students were not assigned any topics, but it was suggested that they write something about their doctoral projects. They were told to write freely and not be concerned about grammar, vocabulary or formatting. They were also told that the teacher would respond to their logs with either a comment or a question about the contents, but would *not* comment on, or correct, their use of English.

For the purpose of comparison, one group of students was asked to write their logs on paper and submit them in class, the other group was asked to write their logs as e-mails and submit them at any time. The general details of the corpus are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: THE CORPUS OF THE STUDY							
GROUP	STUDENTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF LOGS	TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS/LOG	STUDENTS WITH <150 WORDS/LOG	STUDENTS WITH 150-300 WORDS/LOG	STUDENTS WITH >300 WORDS/LOG
paper-log	23	175	35,750	204	9	10	4
e-log	22	187	44,458	238	4	12	6
TOTAL	45	362	80,208	222	13	22	10

The categories defined by Hyland in his model of interaction in academic discourse (see Figure 1) were chosen as a means of identifying signs of interaction in the texts. Hyland used this taxonomy to analyze research articles (RAs) in disciplines similar to the disciplines represented by the doctoral students, thus Hyland's data could be used as a basis for comparison between RAs and the two different types of logs; such a comparison could help determine the relative degree of interaction evident in the logs.

In his model, Hyland differentiates between markers of stance and markers of engagement. Markers of stance are the linguistic devices writers use to position themselves: hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions. Markers of engagement are the devices writers use to position their readers: reader pronouns, questions, directives, shared knowledge and personal asides.

An initial analysis of the logs revealed two more obvious markers of engagement: replies and apologies. While rare in research articles, they are relevant as markers of engagement in logs and have been included in this analysis.

Each of the categories of linguistic markers that have been used to identify and quantify interaction in this study is presented below with examples from the log texts.



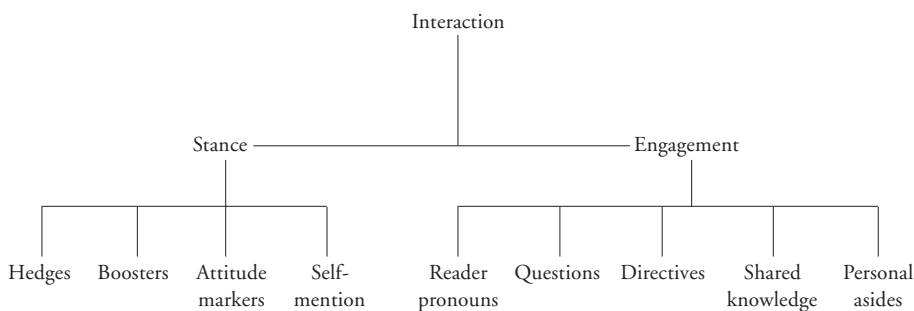


Figure 1: Linguistic markers of stance and engagement (from Hyland, “Stance” 177).

## 2.1. HEDGES

Hedges are “words whose job it is to make things more or less fuzzy” (Lakoff in Hyland, *Hedging* 1). A writer uses hedges in order to indicate a degree of uncertainty in a statement (e.g. *possibly, may, a bit, indicate, seems, appears*) and indicate the writer’s decision to withhold complete commitment to a proposition (Hyland, *Hedging* 178).

- (2) *This theory [...] would seem to be one of the more demanding combinations.* (Richard)

## 2.2. BOOSTERS

Boosters, according to Hyland, are “words which allow writers to express their certainty in what they say and to mark involvement with the topic and solidarity with their audience.” (Hyland, “Stance” 179). Boosters (e.g. *clearly, certainly, undoubtedly, well-known, recognized*) give the impression that the author has clear knowledge and authority regarding whatever is being “boosted.”

- (3) *Last week was a best and a worse week.* (Mark)

## 2.3. ATTITUDE MARKERS

Attitude markers, again referring to Hyland, “indicate the writer’s affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions, conveying surprise, agreement, importance, frustration and so on, rather than commitment” (Hyland, “Stance” 180).

- (4) *Last week I have struggled to do some programming [...] It takes so much times to do this and I think it is not worth much.* (Hannah)

- (5) *Will I manage to make a case study at all? I remember feeling really lost during the first period of this case study.* (Jennifer)

#### 2.4. SELF-MENTIONS

Self-mention refers to the use of first person pronouns (both singular and plural) and possessive adjectives to present propositional, affective and interpersonal information.

- (6) *I have done some literature studies, and now I am planning my experimental work.* (Heather)

#### 2.5. READER PRONOUNS

In order to engage a reader, the writer has the possibility of addressing the reader directly (*you, yours*), or to share agency with the reader (*we, us, ours*).

- (7) *But, as you point out, there will always be people involved both for preventing the accident (e.g. operating and maintaining the barriers) and also as “victims.”* (Kurt)

#### 2.6. QUESTIONS

Hyland claims questions are the strategy of dialogic involvement “par excellence,” inviting engagement and bringing the interlocutors into an arena where they can be led to the writer’s viewpoint (Hyland, “Stance” 185).

- (8) *Of course this is an important concept, my question is why the authors who write the articles do not give a definition first? Does everybody know it but me?* (Shen)

#### 2.7. REPLIES

Replies are students’ responses to the comments or questions I wrote in my responses to the students’ logs. They confirm a writer’s intention to interact with the reader.

- (9) *You asked me [...] if I’m going to tell the people in the production about my work before I start my experimental work in the factory. And the answer is of course yes.* (Molly)



## 2.8. DIRECTIVES

Directives instruct the reader to perform an action or to see things in a way determined by the writer. Hyland notes that directives in the “hard sciences” are probably so common because these disciplines tend to use directives to economize their expression (Hyland, “Stance” 184).

- (10) *I'll try to explain using a figure (see attachment). (John)*

## 2.9. SHARED KNOWLEDGE

Appeals to shared knowledge position readers “within apparently naturalized boundaries of disciplinary understanding ... where readers are asked to recognize something as familiar or accepted” (Hyland, “Stance” 184).

- (11) *Today, during your lectures, I have heard few interesting point for a thinking. At the same time, I think this can be a topic and for one of my the logbook entries... Continuing the topic from the previous logbook I would like to say a few words about cooperation and relationship between the people. (Ilka)*

## 2.10. PERSONAL ASIDES

Personal asides allow writers to address readers directly by briefly interrupting the argument to offer a comment on what has been said; the comment is often enclosed by parentheses. As Hyland describes them, personal asides are made by the writer’s “turning to the reader in mid-flow ... the writer acknowledges and responds to an active audience” (Hyland, “Stance” 183).

- (12) *Knowing the speed of sound in air would be knowing the velocity of the signal in the earth (which changes from rock type to rock type). (John)*

## 2.11. APOLOGIES

Apologies (and excuses) are the writer’s way of asking the reader for forgiveness or tolerance, and signal the wish to maintain a good relationship with the reader.

- (13) *I am sorry that I am writing not in time, but I was very busy all this weak. (Kim)*

The numbers of markers of interaction were tallied and averaged for each student, each category and each type of log. The averages for each type of log were



then compared to averages of the RAs from the relevant disciplines in Hyland's study.

### 3. RESULTS

The results of the analysis of the markers of interaction in the log texts and the corresponding RA results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: LINGUISTIC MARKERS OF INTERACTION (PER 1000 WORDS). A COMPARISON OF RESEARCH ARTICLES (RAS), PAPER LOGS AND E-LOGS

	RAs*	PAPER LOGS	E-LOGS
Hedges	10.3	5.0	6.6
Boosters	4.5	1.8	2.5
Attitude markers	4.2	23.8	20.1
Self-mention	3.3	52.3	53.4
Reader pronouns	0.9	0.7	8.6
Questions	0.1	0.4	3.6
Replies**	–	0.2	2.1
Directives	2.1	0.7	1.6
Apologies/excuses**	–	0.1	1.0
Shared knowledge	0.3	0.5	2.9
Asides	0.0	0.4	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>85.9</b>	<b>103.1</b>

\* The numbers are the average number of markers of interaction in a corpus of RAs in physics, biology, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering as reported by Hyland ("Stance" 187). The numbers differ from the totals Hyland presented, since the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, applied linguistics and marketing are omitted here.

\*\* These markers of engagement are not used by Hyland and can therefore not be compared.

Considering the relatively informal nature of logs, the numbers of markers of interaction were expected to be greater in the logs than in the RAs. This was the case: the number of markers in the paper logs was three times as great, and in the e-logs four times as great as the number of markers of interaction in RAs.

The table also reveals that most of the differences between the total numbers of linguistic markers of interaction in RAs and logs are due to the high numbers of attitude markers and self-mentions. Given the seemingly informal, private nature of logs, it is not surprising that there are relatively many personal, affective markers, and that the total numbers of markers of interaction are high. Although expected, these differences warrant our attention.



Other noticeable differences between paper logs and e-logs are found in four categories—reader pronouns, questions, replies and shared knowledge—all of which are categories of engagement.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Counting and categorizing markers of interaction provided information about the relatively high use of markers of interaction that could be observed in the texts. The numbers suggest that the level of interaction is far more extensive in logs than in RAs. It is also significantly greater in e-logs than in paper logs.

While the numbers indicate a relatively high degree of interaction and imply that dialogue may in fact take place, the process of identifying the markers revealed reasons to be cautious in interpreting the numbers at face value. In order to categorize the markers, it was necessary to examine their context and co-texts. This analysis was a process which provided insight into the functions of the markers that must be considered in any interpretation of the numbers. On the whole, the analysis revealed a qualitatively deeper level of interaction and reflection than was reflected in the numbers.

The following comments on the categories are relevant in interpreting the results in Table 2 and in understanding the logs as a forum for dialogue.

### 4.1. HEDGES

Few of the hedges in the logs resembled hedges in RAs, where the writer uses hedges to tone down a finding or an opinion. The most common type of hedges in logs were related to the doubts the students had regarding their own ability to meet the demands and deadlines that a doctoral student is faced with. These hedges were invariably collocated with self reference and negation:

(14) ... *but I will probably not be finished in time.* (Sarah)

### 4.2. BOOSTERS

There were relatively few boosters in the corpus. The lack of boosters could perhaps be attributed to the relatively high number of attitude markers, many of which acted as boosters, but did not fit the category as used by Hyland.

### 4.3. ATTITUDE MARKERS

Considering the informal, reflective types of texts that comprised both paper and e-logs, one might expect a rather large number of attitude markers, and this





was the case. Verbs such as *struggle*, *worry*, *fear*, characterized the feelings of a doctoral student. Further analysis showed that the use of dynamic verbs (e.g. *struggle*) was more common than the use of static verbs (e.g. *was*), especially in the e-logs. Students also used a range of adjectives such as *afraid*, *frustrated*, *depressed*, *scary*, *fascinating*, *happy*, *thrilled* that served to convey their emotions.

- (15) *This week I am wondering about whether people in industry avoid decisions ... we postponed the decision and they called it a success. I was stunned.* (Carl)

Analysis of attitude markers revealed that the division of stance and engagement is artificial, since most attitude markers functioned as ways for students to establish a stance while making attempts to engage their reader. Emoticons, onomatopoeic expressions and exclamation points (for example: “:-) :-) :-)” and other emotional outbursts such as “yeah,” “hurrah,” and “GGRRR”) indicated the writer’s affect while also functioning to engage the reader. A smiley or winking face was not only a presentation of a positive attitude or joking manner on the part of the writer, but also an invitation to the reader to join in on the pleasant feelings or the joke. Or, in the case below, the wink “;D” could be categorized as a hedge of uncertainty, an attitude marker to present the writer as a friendly person (stance) or a way of catching my attention and seeking my reassurance (engagement):

- (16) *I feel a little bit worried: some students at the course have already published articles and have been working as researcher for years whereas I have only obtained my master last year (I’m 24), I have never published an article so maybe I’m not that good in writing review article... ;D* (Peter)

Attitude markers located in the first sentence of a log also served to engage the reader as much as to take a stance. Richard, for example, used attitude markers as a way to “hook” his reader with a humorous, attention-getting first line:

- (17) *This week I have found out how enjoyable industrial espionage can be.* (Richard)

Other students started their logs with negative attitude markers to call attention to their predicament and engage me as their reader.

- (18) *I have never been so sad and frustrated ever in my life.* (Karen)

The process of identifying attitude markers revealed a major challenge regarding counting. Consider the following excerpt:

- (19) *From rumours and stories I have heard that this description [project description] are only going to be read by a horde of bureaucrat who actually do not give a “sensored words” about what you write as long as it is between five and ten pages.* (John)



There is not a single word in the text that qualifies independently as an attitude marker according to Hyland's categories. However, the text as a whole leaves the reader with no doubt about the writer's attitude.

#### 4.4. SELF-MENTIONS

Self-mentions were by far the most commonly used markers of interaction in both paper and e-logs (average 52.8/1000) and were used by every student. As could be expected, this is in stark contrast to the use of self-mention in RAs (average 3.3/1000) where writers tend to avoid self-mention in order to give the impression of objectivity.

While the prevalence of "I" in the log indicated the writer's willingness to be visible, not all instances of "I" in the logs could be construed to indicate a high degree of interaction. "I" was sometimes a simple placeholder in a sentence, rather than a sign of interaction. This was demonstrated in logs of the three students whose paper logs had the largest number of self-mention per thousand words (80.9/1000, 88/1000 and 100/1000, respectively). Notably, the total number of words in the combined logs of each of these students was less than 1000 words (680, 780 and 970, respectively). The logs with relatively many self-mentions tended to resemble lists in the form of simple or compound sentences, as in the following text in which self-mentions comprise 15% of the text:

- (20) *I have done some literature studies, and now I am planning my experimental work. I hope I will be able to start doing some experimental work this autumn. On Monday I had a meeting with people from the industry [name of company] where we discussed the experimental scheme.* (Heather)

In contrast, there were writers who constructed their texts with no self-mentions by leaving out the subject of their sentences. Even without self-mentions, however, there was no doubt that the writer was the subjective agent:

- (21) *Wrote and rewrote a rough draft. Difficult to find a good way to organize the material. Still going back and forth on which topics to include. Found out that the review will be a topological one, in an informative style.* (Barbara)

The overall significance of self-mentions was not the numbers, but the writer's self—often a reflective self—in relation to the theme of the text:

- (22) *I feel a professionally risk in labeling myself as industrial ecologist while the definition of industrial ecology is still remain fluid. I stead of labeling, I should get a professional grounding in the conventional discipline of my choice—applied thermodynamics. This will be provide me with a clearly recognized professional identity, one that my employers and colleagues can readily admit.* (Maria)



#### 4.5. READER PRONOUNS

According to Hyland, the most frequently used engagement device in academic writing is “we” (Hyland, “Stance” 182). In the logs, however, “you” (“your”) was by far the most common reader pronoun, especially in the e-logs. Whereas the research article is addressed to an unknown mass of readers (we) who assumedly have some common disciplinary interest with the writer, the log can be addressed to a specific person (you).

- (23) *Your comparison with toothpaste is not so bad actually, because that is exactly what it looks like (a bit unpleasant colour though).* (Max)

As a familiar and quick way of maintaining communication, the medium of e-mail is conducive to interaction between writer and reader; the relatively common use of “you” could thus be expected. It also implies a relationship between the writer and reader that encourages dialogue, as when “I” and “you” are in the same sentence:

- (24) *Today I write to you just hope someone could share my joy.* (Shen)

#### 4.6. QUESTIONS

According to Hyland, the questions posed in RAs are rhetorical questions which the author answers immediately after asking the question. In the logs, in contrast, questions are either direct questions to the reader (only in e-logs) or rhetorical questions that represent students’ reflections.

- (25) *One of the speakers claimed that innovations processes is not really a topic of research [...] I felt provoked by this statement. What implications has his statement? That only phenomena with a systematic and rational nature is qualified as a topic of research? That my project is just a waste of time? That the addressed need for more knowledge on how to facilitate creativity and innovation should be silenced because no answers can be found? I don't think so.* (Jennifer)

Questions in the logs are important indicators that logs provide a forum for dialogue. Direct questions demonstrate that the writer is attempting to make direct contact with a specific reader, with expectations of response. Questions, like Jennifer’s above and Shen’s below, seem to be a way for the writers to reflect upon and challenge their disciplines and their own roles within those disciplines.

- (26) *The tem [term] of marginal cost of water in irrigation system is discussed everywhere, but I can not find the definition of the concept of marginal cost of water in irrigation system...Of course this is an important concept, my question is why the authors who write the articles do not give a definition first? Does everybody know it but me?* (Shen)



#### 4.7. REPLIES

Replies are significant in that they indicate a willingness to maintain interaction and possible dialogue between the writer and the reader. The numbers of replies in the logs reflect a significant difference between paper logs and e-logs: there were only nine replies in the paper logs (although the reader/teacher had asked 79 direct questions); in the e-logs there were 88 replies to 88 questions posed by the reader/teacher.

#### 4.8. SHARED KNOWLEDGE

Of the remaining categories (directives, apologies, shared knowledge and personal asides), shared knowledge is the category that provides most insight into the dialogic character of the logs—especially the e-logs. In their logs, students referred to what had been discussed in class, continued writing about a theme they had previously taken up in their logs, or picked up on comments the teacher had written. In this way, the log writers used shared knowledge to establish a basis for dialogue between the writer and the reader. They used this shared knowledge as they reflected upon the shared traditions and values in their disciplines.

- (27) *I am in the fortunate position that in principle I can choose to work with or get ideas from several clever people working within my field. This might, however, be a disadvantage when writing papers, due to the fact that clever and ambitious people like to have their names on papers. I think my supervisor is a little bit worried about this, since I already have started cooperation with another professor. He lectured me to make this other professor do his share of the work. This is much in line with what you said in the lecture two weeks ago. I am not used to thinking about credit and publication, but I just as well have to get used to it!* (Gordon)

### 5. CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed a relatively high prevalence of linguistic markers of interaction in logs, and that the markers of interaction were even more prominent in e-logs than in paper logs. These findings indicate that the logs are a relevant forum for dialogue. Hyland's model of interaction in academic discourse provided a taxonomy that revealed the variety and the relative incidence of markers of interaction. However, closer analysis of the contexts and co-texts of the markers revealed that using the model to achieve only quantitative results was insufficient and sometimes even misleading. A qualitative analysis of the markers provided insight into their complexities and significance.

On the whole, this study indicates that logs provide a forum for interaction and dialogue. It also indicates that e-logs are more conducive to interaction than



paper logs. This practice of “dialogging”—observing, questioning, challenging in dialogue—may indeed be considered a means of facilitating student development.

## WORKS CITED

- BIBER, Douglas. *University Language: A Corpus-Based Study of Spoken and Written Registers*. 3 vols. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2006.
- BIBER, Douglas and Edward FINEGAN, eds. *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Register*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994.
- BUCHOLTZ, Mary and Kira HALL. “Identity and Interaction: A Sociocultural Linguistic Approach.” *Discourse Studies* 7.4-5 (2005): 585-614.
- EIK-NES, Nancy Lea. *Dialogging: Negotiating Disciplinary Identity Through the Medium of Logs*. Trondheim: Department of Language and Communication Studies, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2008.
- HUNSTON, Susan and Geoff THOMPSON, eds. *Evaluation in Text*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.
- HYLAND, Ken. “The Author in the Text: Hedging in Scientific Writing.” *Hong Kong Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* 18 (1995): 33-42.
- “Bringing in the Reader.” *Written Communication* 18.4 (2001): 549-574.
- *Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2004.
- *Hedging in Scientific Research Articles*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998.
- *Metadiscourse*. London: Continuum, 2005.
- “Stance and Engagement: a Model of Interaction in Academic Discourse.” *Discourse Studies* 7.2 (2005): 173-191.
- LABOV, William. *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1972.
- LEA, Mary R. and Brian V. STREET. “Staff Feedback: An Academic Literacies Approach.” *Student Writing in Higher Education*. Ed. M. R. Lea and B. Steirer. Buckingham: Open UP/Society for Research into Higher Education, 2000. 32-48.
- “The “Academic Literacies” Model: Theory and Applications.” Paper presented at SIGET: 4th International Symposium on Genre Studies, Santa Catarina, Brazil, 2007. Originally published in *Theory Into Practice* 45.4 (2006): 368-377.
- LILLIS, Theresa M. “Academic Literacies: Drawing on Bakhtin to Move from Critique to Design.” *Language and Education* 17.3 (2003): 192-207.
- LILLIS, Theresa M. and Mary SCOTT. “Defining Academic Literacies Research: Issues of Epistemology, Ideology and Strategy.” *Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4.1 (2007): 5-32.





# CONCLUDING YOUR MASTER'S LEVEL THESIS

Jo Lewkowicz  
Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego

## ABSTRACT

Students writing a Master's level thesis often seek advice not only on their research but also on how to approach the writing of such a document. This is not surprising as for many writing a thesis is a completely new experience and one that many have to complete in a foreign language. The advice available is often generic and not necessarily appropriate. To help such students we need to better understand the structure of these documents. This paper looks at one section of the thesis, that of the concluding chapter to determine its rhetoric structure and compare it with the advice available to the students within the Polish context in which they are writing.

KEY WORDS: Master's thesis, conclusions, move analysis.

## RESUMEN

Los estudiantes que se encuentran en el proceso de preparación de sus tesis de licenciatura con frecuencia buscan asesoramiento no sólo sobre aspectos relacionados con la investigación sino también con la redacción de tales documentos. Ello no es sorprendente si se tiene en cuenta que para muchos de ellos la preparación de este tipo de tesis constituye una experiencia completamente nueva y que en muchas ocasiones lleva consigo la redacción en una lengua extranjera. Las recomendaciones existentes suelen caracterizarse por ser generalizaciones que no necesariamente son las adecuadas. Para ayudar a estos estudiantes necesitamos tener un mayor conocimiento de la estructura retórica de estos documentos. Este estudio examina una sección en particular de la tesis de licenciatura, el capítulo de conclusiones, con la finalidad de determinar su estructura retórica y compararla con las recomendaciones de las que disponen los estudiantes dentro del contexto académico de Polonia en el que redactan sus tesis.

PALABRAS CLAVE: tesis de licenciatura/maestría, conclusiones, análisis de movimientos retóricos.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

An area of academic discourse written in English that has come under close scrutiny in recent years is that of thesis/dissertation writing (here the terms thesis/dissertation are used synonymously to refer to research reports written at Master's and PhD level). Interest has been at the level of the overall organisation of the



document across different academic disciplines (see, for example, Paltridge, “Thesis Dissertation Writing”), as well as specific sections of the manuscript, for example, the acknowledgements (Hyland, “Graduates”) and the way in which writers acknowledge their own work and the work of others (e.g. Thompson and Tribble). This interest has been primarily spurred by the growing number of EAL students writing a thesis in English and a realisation within the academic community that compiling a thesis in English is a demanding task and that many research students need guidance and support not only in their academic endeavours but also in the writing process. It is, after all, the written document that is examined and ultimately determines whether the candidate succeeds. Therefore, it is important that the text is deemed to communicate effectively with its audience, that is, with the examiners, and others interested in the field of research undertaken by the student.

The growing interest in theses written in English as well as our increased understanding of the complexities involved in this genre has brought assistance to the novice writer in a number of ways. An increasing number of both generic and subject specific course books addressing issues of writing a thesis and guiding students through the writing process are appearing in the market (see, for example, Cooley and Lewkowicz, *Dissertation*; Glathorn and Joyner, *Writing*; Heppner and Heppner, *Writing Publishing*; Swales and Feak, *Academic*). In addition, a variety of approaches to teaching thesis and dissertation writing have been developed and described in the literature (see e.g. Aitchison, “Thesis Writing Circles”; Allison et al., “Dissertation”; Nelson and San Miguel, “Designing”; Paltridge, “Teaching”, Thompson, “Citation”). In some cases graduate students are offered help in the form of one-to-one consultations with a language expert, in others workshops are organised for those wishing to attend while in some universities graduate students are required to attend a thesis/dissertation writing course. Furthermore, universities are increasingly making available help manuals and guidelines on the web. The needs of graduate students are thus progressively being recognised and met and in many universities provision is being made not only to assist EAL students but also to those whose first language is English.

It is worth noting, however, that the studies of theses/dissertations and discussion of how best to address the needs of graduate students’ writing in English have generally emanated from countries where English is the dominant language, such as Australia, the USA and the UK, or from universities where English is the medium of education, such as the National University of Singapore and the University of Hong Kong. Research to date has thus explored the conventions and norms of such writing within these specific contexts. There are, however, numerous students outside what could be termed as Kachru’s (*Alchemy*) inner and outer circles, i.e. within the expanding circle such as those studying at European universities who undertake writing a thesis in English. An example of such a group would be students studying English and applied linguistics at Polish universities. Do they, or indeed should they, accommodate to academic writing conventions that are considered good practice in English-medium universities or are there academic conventions and expectations within their own culture which they conform to when fulfilling the thesis requirement for their degree?





To begin to explore the above issue, this paper investigates the structure of one part of the dissertation/thesis written by Polish students of English Philology or Applied Linguistics. It looks at the thesis conclusion to determine what moves writers make when bringing their Master's level thesis to an end. It then considers whether the moves are similar to those outlined in the literature to date on writing a thesis/dissertation in English and, where differences occur, to what extent these arise from the different expectations of a thesis written in Polish. (The thesis conclusion was selected for analysis as having supervised and examined numerous Master's theses written by Polish students, I gained the impression that they often differed markedly from my own expectations and were therefore worth investigating.)

## 2. CONCLUDING MOVES

Move analysis (Swales, "Genre Analysis") which looks at the function and purpose of segments of text at the general level and how these are realised through more specific rhetorical steps has contributed significantly to our understanding of text specific discourse and language. It has been applied in analysing various sections of the thesis/dissertation resulting in reports on the structure of introductions (Bunton, "Generic"; Dudley-Evans, "Genre"; Samraj "Discourse"), the literature review (Kwan "Schematic") as well as the discussion (Dudley-Evans, "Genre"). Yet, as Samraj notes most of the reports have related to the PhD document rather than the Masters' Thesis.

The early work on theses' conclusions carried out by Dudley-Evans ("Genre") suggested that this section of a Master's thesis focuses on summarising the main results and claims of the study and then proceeds to recommendations of future work; it is thus fairly simple in its structure. However, Dudley-Evans' analysis was based on theses where the conclusion was part of a larger Discussion section. Yet the conclusion of both the Master's thesis and the PhD is often a separate, stand-alone chapter as has been shown by Paltridge ("Thesis Dissertation Writing") in his analysis of the overall structure of this genre, and when presented as a separate chapter it is likely to vary from conclusions that are integrated into the Discussion (Bunton, "Structure").

Bunton (*ibid.*) analysed 45 PhD conclusions, 42 of which were presented as separate chapters. His analysis revealed that conclusion chapters can be categorized according to whether they are thesis-focused or field-oriented, though the former tend to predominate across different disciplines, especially in the humanities and social sciences. Within each type of conclusion certain patterns tend to prevail: in the thesis-focussed conclusion the majority start by restating the aim, purpose or hypothesis of the study (IR), all include a consolidation move (C) and then proceed to recommendations (R). The field-oriented conclusion, on the other hand, either proceeds along a problem-solution text structure or an argument structure. The individual steps within the segments depend on the moves taken by the author, but are generally cyclical in nature. These chapters tend to be more com-



plex and display more steps than the research article and Master's theses conclusions described previously. Bunton (*ibid*) therefore questions the accuracy of many of the guidebooks available which treat the conclusion as an integral part of the Discussion.

### 3. THE STUDY

This study undertaken on Master's thesis conclusions had two aims. The first was to verify whether conclusions written by Master's level students are presented as stand-alone separate chapters and if so whether the moves they follow are different from those when conclusions are integrated into the longer Discussion section of the thesis. The second aim was to consider whether the conclusions written in English by Master's students in Poland follow the patterns reported in the literature and if there are differences, to what extent these arise from different conventions of writing a thesis in Polish and in English.

The study is based on 15 Masters' level theses submitted between 2005 and 2009 at Warsaw University's Institute of Applied Linguistics. All the theses were on topics related to applied linguistics and language studies, with half of them relating to some aspect(s) of translation. They were examined for their overall structure and in terms of the way the conclusions were written. A similar procedure to that described by Bunton ("Structure"), where the texts were analysed according to length, title of chapter, references cited as well as the moves and steps used by the writers, was adopted. Then, the structure of the conclusions was compared with the findings of earlier studies on theses conclusions as well as advice provided for those writing a thesis in thesis writing guides readily available to Polish students.

#### 3.1. OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER'S THESES

Most of the Master's theses analysed here do not strictly follow the patterns that have been reported in the literature (Paltridge, "Thesis Dissertation Writing"). Only one could be described as topic-based, consisting of three chapters each of which dealt with a different topic, plus an introduction and conclusion. The remaining 14 displayed characteristics of both topic-based theses as well as elements of the IMRAD structure. All had a brief introduction to the thesis and the topic of interest, an extensive discussion of the literature often made up of several chapters each with its own topic-related title, a study in which there was a brief introduction, then an outline of the study design, findings and discussion of findings. Most (13 of the 15) had a separate concluding chapter, which appears to be more in line with Bunton's ("Structure") findings for PhD conclusions. The structure of these theses could be seen as being made up of two separate parts: a theoretical, literature-based part followed by a practical application. Several of the authors (5 of the 15) actually specified such a two-part division in their table of content.



### 3.2. MASTER'S LEVEL CONCLUSIONS

All the conclusions are short, varying in length from two-thirds of a page to four and a half pages, with an average length of two pages. In 13 instances they appeared as a separate chapter entitled 'Conclusions' (though only five of these were numbered in sequence with the other chapters). The remaining 2 were part of the chapter reporting on the practical application/study, but with its own heading which in one case was "Conclusions" and in the other "General conclusions." Most probably because of their short length, none were subdivided into sections—the text was continuous. In one of the conclusions, however, key words and phrases were highlighted as a way of helping the reader through the text.

All but one of the theses conclusions were, using Bunton's ("Structure") distinction, thesis-focussed, in other words their overall structure is based around the thesis. One of these was difficult to classify as the author fails to make reference to the thesis until the penultimate paragraph. However, a careful reading of the conclusion shows that the writer was not attempting to problematize a world issue, but rather objectify and so possibly distance herself from the work she had carried out and from her findings. The remaining thesis starts as field-focussed, giving a general introduction to the field before shifting to the thesis and the findings that arise from the carried out study.

### 3.3. CONCLUSION MOVES

All the conclusions attempted to draw together the threads introduced in the various sections, thus they all could be considered to display a "consolidation move" (C). However, this move did not necessarily set out to consolidate the research space as was the case for the PhD theses studied by Bunton ("Structure"). Some of the authors of the MA conclusions under study used the conclusion to summarise the individual chapters of the thesis, focussing equally, if not more, on the theory introduced than on the research carried out. Thus a distinction needs to be drawn between conclusions *consolidating the research space*, that is, those focussing primarily on the study and its findings, and those *consolidating the thesis as a whole* where the information provided in the separate chapters is summarised and the conclusion functions more like a backward looking signpost.

#### 3.3.1. *Consolidation of Research Space*

Of the 14 thesis-focussed conclusions, 10 were classified as consolidating the research space. Seven of these started with an introductory paragraph in which the aim/purpose of the study was restated. Thus, the consolidation move was preceded by an initial restatement (IR) move.

Typically such conclusions started as follows:



- (1) The aim of the present thesis was to compare...  
 This work had as its primary aim to describe...  
 As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the primary purpose of the study was to...

The remaining three conclusions that set out to consolidate the research space varied in how they introduced this section/chapter. Two of the authors started by restating their main finding(s), while the other one provided some general background information to the topic under discussion before moving on to presenting a summary of the findings.

The predominant moves in the conclusions analysed so far appear to have been either IR<sup>^</sup>C (2 moves) or C (one move). However, three of the IR<sup>^</sup>C conclusions had a further “recommendation” (R) move suggesting future research, and were classified as displaying a 3 move structure: IR<sup>^</sup>C<sup>^</sup>R. In all cases the progression of moves never varied and the Consolidation move always was the most extensive.

Many of the same Steps that were identified in the Consolidation move of the PhD theses analysed by Bunton (“Structure”) were also present in the Master’s conclusions analysed in this study. The number of steps within the Consolidation move varied from a total of 6 to 29. Unsurprisingly, given the shorter length of the Master’s conclusions, the average number of steps per conclusion of 16.8 was considerably lower and the frequency of occurrence of individual steps (that is the number of occurrences, divided by the 10 conclusions under consideration) was lower (see Table 1). However, the steps were cyclical with a predominant pattern being Finding ^ Claim ^ Explanation ^ Finding ^ Claim.

TABLE 1: STEPS TAKEN WITHIN THE CONSOLIDATION MOVE OF CONCLUSIONS THAT FOCUSED ON CONSOLIDATING THE RESEARCH SPACE

STEP	NUMBER OF THESES IN WHICH THE STEP APPEARS (MAX. 10)	FREQUENCY OF STEP
Findings	10	6
Claims	10	5
Explanation	6	2
Reference to literature	6	1.4
Information	4	0.9
Limitation	2	0.2
Evaluation	4	0.7
Reference to theory	1	0.1
Method	3	0.3

Two notable differences between these Master's and Bunton's PhD conclusions need to be noted. First the method of carrying out the study was only mentioned in three of the Master's conclusions, thus supporting Dudley-Evans' ("Genre") view that this is not a prominent move in Master's level conclusions. Secondly, reference to the literature was relatively infrequent, present in only 6 of the 10 conclusions under consideration and only 9 of the 14 references noted could be classified as specific; the remaining references were to the literature review as a whole or to the chapter reviewing the underlying theory as the following examples illustrate:

- (2) As the overview in the theoretical part of this thesis showed, ...  
The literature analysis indicates that...

A final point that needs to be made here relates to the Evaluations included in these conclusions. Their frequency at 0.7 is comparable to that of 0.9 found in the humanities and social science PhDs studied by Bunton (*ibid*). However, whereas in the PhDs the evaluative comment related to the method and/or product, in the case of the Master's theses the evaluation was usually of someone else's work, that of the subject under study as the following examples show:

- (3) eTwinning teachers deserve to be referred to as the teachers of the future...  
...I believe that the authors were successful in enabling a Polish audience to...

Alternatively, the evaluation was of the thesis as in the following instance:

- (4) To conclude, ... the main goal of this work has been successfully achieved.

### 3.3.2. *Consolidation of Thesis*

The remaining four thesis-focussed conclusions, all of which appear as a separate chapter, differ substantially from the others in that they summarize the whole thesis step by step rather than attempt to link the research carried out with the literature and so indicate how the research space has been filled. The authors simply progress through each chapter of the thesis highlighting the most important points. The following introductory phrases of the first 4 paragraphs of one of these conclusions illustrate this point:

- (5) In the first chapter of my thesis I have discussed...  
Secondly, I have devoted Chapter Two to...  
Furthermore I have elaborated on the issue of...  
The main aim of Chapter Three was to...

This author ends with a final paragraph in which she summarizes the summary. Two others, after completing the summary of the practical part of the thesis,



do attempt to extend the conclusion by suggesting what more could be done in the area of their research. Thus, their conclusions can be seen as consisting of two moves, the summary followed by a recommendation. However, at no point does either of the authors attempt to link the summary of the theoretical chapters with that of the study undertaken, so underlining the two part nature of the thesis. The remaining thesis conclusion also ends with another move, this time a short evaluative comment but one relating not to the project at hand but to the level of success with which the translators studied were successful in their endeavours and not the extent to which the study allowed certain claims or conclusions to be drawn.

Unlike the conclusions discussed above that attempted to consolidate the research space in which a number of different steps are taken and findings and claims are presented in cyclical fashion, these conclusions are progressive and the move is determined by the content of the chapter being summarised. Hence there appears little need to conduct a step analysis of these conclusions. A further point worth noting with regard to these conclusions is that in each case the overview of the theoretical part of the thesis is very global and general and there are no specific references to the literature. The following examples are a case in point where the authors simply describe what the chapters contain, as if preparing the reader for the text rather than drawing conclusions or highlighting the main points that they consider important:

- (6) The first chapter contains a historical overview of the most salient approaches to... The emphasis of the thesis is, however, on contemporary theory of [...] which is further developed in chapter two.
- I have devoted Chapter Two to the most widely used text patterns, focussing on... I have also mentioned other patterns the recognition of which makes comprehension of the written text easier... I have additionally discussed...

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This analysis of a limited set of Master's level conclusions all from the field of English applied linguistics written in Poland shows that there is considerable variability in how conclusions are written and some of the variability seems to be specific to the context in which the theses were written. Most, though not all, of the conclusions were presented as a separate chapter which reflects the demands of a thesis written in Polish (see, for example, Boć Węglińska). Also in line with the guidelines provided in these handbooks, several of the authors did not number the concluding chapter (or the introduction), thus setting it aside from the rest of the work.

The distinction between thesis-focused and field-oriented conclusions proposed by Bunton ("Structure") for PhD conclusions seems to apply to those written at Master's level, though only one of the 15 conclusions studied here could be classified as field-oriented. Because of the limited data set the analysis of this conclusion has not been presented in detail, but it was found to follow a Field ^ Con-



solidation pattern identified in one of Bunton's (ibid) PhDs. Inevitably, it needs to be ascertained whether other conclusions follow this pattern or whether this one was an exception.

Although in all the remaining conclusions studied the Consolidation move was dominant, how this was approached differed. The majority of authors (10 out of 14) followed the expected pattern of consolidating the research space; others, however, saw the need to focus not on the research but on the thesis as a whole. These latter conclusions read more like extended abstracts or the sort of summary that appears towards the end of an introduction signposting the organisation of the text. It could therefore be argued that these conclusions were inadequate for their purpose. But, given that more than 25% of the conclusions studied fell into this category and they had been deemed acceptable by their examiners, it would appear necessary to try to identify a reason for this approach. One possible explanation is that students perceive the thesis as being made up of two separate parts and not as a single entity and therefore consider that an adequate conclusion requires highlighting the main points of each section rather than tying the whole entity together, coming full circle and mirroring the propositions set out in the introduction. This perception is reinforced in some of the Polish guidebooks on how to write a thesis at Master's level which give the two part thesis made up of a theory section and a practical application prominence. Little mention is made in these guidebooks of the need to narrow-down and focus the literature, an aspect of research writing that is often emphasised in the equivalent guidebooks written in English (e.g. Cooley and Lewkowicz; Swales and Feak). This may, in turn, be why students see the need for an extensive theory section and a downplaying of the actual research study.

Those conclusions that adhered more to the expected norms, that is the 10 that consolidated the research space, were found to be complex in the number of reiterative Steps they took, though less complex and varied than the PhDs studied by Bunton ("Structure"). The 10 conclusions all included findings and claims, and in addition other steps such as explanations and evaluation. They were sparse in specific reference to the literature and in discussion of limitations, but again this seems to some extent reflect the advice given in the handbooks in Polish that advocate a separate chapter for the conclusion (e.g. Boć Węglińska).

It would seem that these Polish students writing a thesis in English may be vacillating between conventions of academic writing in English and advice that is more readily available to them on writing a thesis in Polish. The question remains: what impact is this having on the students and the theses they are submitting?

## WORKS CITED

- AITCHISON, Claire. "Thesis Writing Circles." *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8.2 (2003): 97-115.
- ALLISON, Desmond, Linda COOLEY, Jo Lewkowicz, and David Nunan "Dissertation Writing in Action: The Development of a Dissertation Writing Support Program for ESL Graduate Research Students." *English for Specific Purposes* 17.2 (1998): 199-217.





- BOĆ, Jan. *Jak Pisać Pracę Magisterską [How to Write a Master's Thesis]*. Wrocław: Karolina, 2006.
- BUNTON, David R. "Generic Moves in Ph.D Introduction Chapters." *Academic Discourse*. Ed. J. Flowerdew. London: Longman, 2002. 57-75.
- "The Structure of PhD Conclusions Chapters." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 4 (2005): 207-224.
- COOLEY, Linda and Jo LEWKOWICZ. *Dissertation Writing in Practice*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong UP, 2003.
- DUDLEY-EVANS, Tony. "Genre Analysis: An Approach to Text Analysis in ESP." *Advances in Written Text Analysis*. Ed. M. Coulthard. London: Routledge, 1994. 219-228.
- "Genre Analysis: An Investigation of the Introduction and Discussion Sections of MSc. Dissertations." *Talking About Text*. Ed. M. Coulthard. Birmingham: English Language Research, University of Birmingham, 1986. 128-145.
- GLATHORN, Allan A. and Randy L. JOYNER. *Writing the Winning Thesis or Dissertation*. Thousand Oaks: Crown, 2005.
- HEPPNER, P. Paul and Mary J. HEPPNER. *Writing and Publishing Your Thesis, Dissertation, and Research: A Guide for Students in the Helping Professions*. Belmont: Brooks/Cole, 2003.
- HYLAND, Ken. "Graduates' Gratitude: The Generic Structure of Dissertation Acknowledgements." *English for Specific Purposes* 23.3 (2004): 303-324.
- KACHRU, Braj B. *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-native Englishes*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1990.
- KWAN, Becky. "The Schematic Structure of Literature Reviews in Doctoral Theses of Applied Linguistics." *English for Specific Purposes* 25.1 (2006): 30-55.
- NELSON, Cynthia D. and Caroline SAN MIGUEL. "Designing Doctoral Writing Workshops that Problematised Textual Practices." *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8.2 (2003): 116-136.
- PALTRIDGE, Brian. "Teaching Thesis and Dissertation Writing." *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8.2 (2003): 78-96.
- "Thesis and Dissertation Writing: An Examination of Published Advice and Actual Practice." *English for Specific Purposes* 21.2 (2002): 125-143.
- RUIYING, Yang and Desmond ALLISON. "Research Articles in Applied Linguistics: Moving from Results to Conclusions." *English for Specific Purposes* 22.4 (2003): 365-385.
- SAMRAJ, Betty. "A Discourse Analysis of Master's Theses across Disciplines with a Focus on Introductions." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 7 (2008): 55-67.
- SWALES, John M. *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- SWALES, John M. and Christine FEAK. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994.
- THOMPSON, Paul M. "Citation Practices in PhD Theses." *Rethinking Language Pedagogy from a Corpus Perspective*. Ed. L. Burnard and T. McEnery. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000. 91-101.
- THOMPSON, Paul M. and Chris TRIBBLE. "Looking at Citations: Using Corpora in English for Academic Purposes." *Language Learning and Technology* 5.3 (September 2001): 91-105.
- WĘGLIŃSKA, Maria. *Jak Pisać Pracę Magisterską? [How to Write a Master's Thesis?]* Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza 'Impuls', 2009.



# PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES IN RESEARCH ARTICLE INTRODUCTIONS: AN INTERLINGUISTIC AND CROSS-DISCIPLINARY GENRE ANALYSIS

Pedro Martín Martín  
Isabel K. León Pérez  
Universidad de La Laguna

## ABSTRACT

Publishing research unavoidably involves an adequate use of promotional strategies in order to meet the expectations of the members of particular scientific communities, which may vary both across cultures and disciplines. In this paper, we examine comparatively the presence of rhetorical promotion in the Introduction section of 80 research articles written in English and Spanish in the two related subdisciplines of Clinical and Health Psychology, and Dermatology. The results revealed that, overall, the English texts present a higher degree of rhetorical promotion in both fields, although some degree of cross-disciplinary variation was also found. This indicates that, in shaping the promotional features of the genre, when professional and national cultural factors interact simultaneously, cultural factors tend to override the influence of disciplinary context.

KEY WORDS: Promotional rhetorical strategies, research articles, move analysis.

## RESUMEN

La publicación científica inevitablemente lleva consigo un uso apropiado de estrategias de promoción (persuasión retórica) con la finalidad de satisfacer las expectativas de los miembros de las distintas comunidades científicas, que pueden variar tanto de una cultura a otra como entre disciplinas. En este artículo examinamos de forma comparada la presencia de persuasión retórica en las Introducciones de 80 artículos de investigación escritos en inglés y español en dos subdisciplinas afines: Psicología Clínica y de la Salud, y Dermatología. Los resultados revelan que, en términos generales, los textos en inglés presentan un grado mayor de promoción retórica en ambas especialidades, aunque también se encontró un grado relativo de variación interdisciplinar, lo que indica que, en la configuración de los elementos persuasivos de este género, cuando interactúan simultáneamente factores socio-culturales y profesionales, los culturales tienden a predominar sobre la influencia del contexto disciplinario.

PALABRAS CLAVE: estrategias retóricas de persuasión, artículos de investigación, análisis de movimientos retóricos.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of academic writing, the need to publish scientific papers has become an essential issue for those researchers who want to promote their careers. In order to get their papers accepted, researchers have to meet the expectations of the members of their particular disciplinary communities, especially those of the editors of international journals in which the degree of competitiveness is increasingly high. This implies the use of promotional rhetorical strategies that allow writers to “sell” their “product” (Fairclough; Hyland), such as highlighting the novel contribution of their work to the discipline and anticipating findings, even in the Introduction section of the research article (RA). Writers also typically put forward the value of their work by creating a research space which permits them to present their new claims. This basically involves the indication of a knowledge gap and/or the criticism of deficiencies in previously published work by other researchers in the same scientific community. The latter strategy implies a face-threatening act (Myers; Hunston; Salager-Meyer; Burgess and Fagan).

Since Swales' (*Aspects, Genre Analysis*) ground-breaking move analysis of RA Introductions, a good number of studies have analysed the structural organization of the various sections of research papers in English: Nwogu in Medicine; Posteguillo and Shehzad in Computer Science; Ruiying and Allison in Applied Linguistics; Kanoksilapatham in Biochemistry, to cite just a few. A major focus of attention has been the Introduction, since this section generally entails a great deal of complexity in terms of rhetorical options, among them promotional discourse. Although Swales' (*Genre Analysis*) CARS model initially postulated a common structure for RA Introductions in English, subsequent research has revealed that the rhetorical choices that writers make to promote themselves and their work in relation to the other members of their discourse community may vary not only across divergent disciplines (Anthony; Posteguillo), but also across related disciplines (Samraj). This variation depends on the particular social interactions which are established between writers and readers and the actual writing conventions of the discipline itself. In her analysis of RA Introductions from two related fields, Samraj found that the Conservation Biology Introductions fulfil a greater promotional function than the Wildlife Behaviour Introductions through the use of steps such as centrality claims. On the basis of these findings, Swales (*Research*) revised his CARS model and presented a new version, (see our discussion of this version below), which better accounts for most of the limitations encountered in these more recent publications. Studies conducted in the last five years have also shown the existence of intradisciplinary variation. Thus Ozturk investigated the degree of variability in the structure of RA Introductions within two subdisciplines of Applied Linguistics, namely Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Writing. His results revealed a predominant move structure in the first subdiscipline, whereas in the second, two different types of move structure were almost equally frequent. He accounts for the differences encountered in terms of an emerging-established field distinction.

Despite the importance of RA writing for non English-speaking background academics, the studies which have applied the notion of “move analysis” from a



cross-cultural perspective are relatively scarce although, over the last few decades, there has been an increasing number of works comparing English academic writing to other languages, such as, Chinese (Taylor and Chen), Polish (Duszak), Swedish (Fredrickson and Swales), Malay (Ahmad), Spanish (Burgess), Arabic (Fakhri) and Indonesian (Adnan). All these studies have concluded that RA Introductions are influenced, to some extent, by socio-cultural variables and the specific features of the socio-pragmatic context where the texts have been produced (i.e. local constraints). This is clearly seen in a tendency to avoid direct confrontation and an apparent lack of self-promotion as compared with RA Introductions written in English.

In this paper, we attempt to expand this area of genre analytic research by examining comparatively the presence of rhetorical promotion in the Introduction of RAs written in English and Spanish in the two related sub-disciplines of Psychology and Medicine, namely Clinical and Health Psychology, and Dermatology.

## 2. CORPUS AND METHOD

A total of 40 Psychology and Medicine RA Introductions written in English and another 40 written in Spanish over a period of five years (2001-2005) were selected for the present study. Considering that Psychology is divided into several subfields (i.e. Clinical and Health, Behavioural, Cognitive and Neural, Social, Developmental and Educational), in order to avoid any possible rhetorical variation across subdisciplines (see, Ozturk), we have compiled the corpus from research papers reporting empirical investigation (disregarding review and theory/position papers) in the specific subfield of Clinical and Health Psychology alone. The texts in English were selected at random from publications in two of the most prestigious international journals in this subdiscipline: *Health Psychology* and the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*. Similarly, the Spanish texts in this subfield were drawn from the two leading journals in this discipline in Spain: *Anales de Psicología y Revista de Psicología General y Aplicada*. Regarding the Medicine corpus, the 40 papers in both languages were also randomly selected, over the same period of time, from the following leading journals in the related subdiscipline of Dermatology: *Archives of Dermatology*, *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, *Actas Dermo-Sifilográficas* and *Piel*.

### 2.1. THE USE OF “MOVE” AS A UNIT OF GENRE ANALYSIS

For the description of rhetorical promotion in the Introduction of the texts in both disciplines and languages, we have used “move” and “step” as the units of analysis following the pioneering work by Swales (*Aspects*) and then revised and expanded in 1990 and 2004, in which he uses the concept of “move” to describe patterns of organisational content and genre-specific language features. Swales (*Genre Analysis; Research*) emphasises the functional nature of a move, although recognis-



ing its frequent alignment with grammatical units (i.e. clauses or sentences) and lexical signals. Rhetorical moves consist then of functional text elements, as viewed in relation to the rhetorical goal of a text. Moves manifest themselves as text units that occur in typical sequences, and these can be realised by either one or a combination of “steps” or submoves. The concept of “move” thus captures the function of a segment of text at a more general level, whereas “step” refers to the more specific rhetorical choices available to authors to realise the function of “move”.

After conducting an analysis of some 48 article Introductions from a wide range of disciplines, Swales (*Aspects*) posited a four-move structure for a typical article Introduction, a structure that he modified in 1990 reducing the number of moves to three and terming it the “Create a Research Space” (CARS) model. The three moves are: Move 1 (Establishing a territory), Move 2 (Establishing a niche) and Move 3 (Occupying the niche). In order to establish a territory, the writers have to indicate the importance of their research field. This can be achieved by Step 1 (Claiming centrality), Step 2 (Making topic generalizations) and/or Step 3 (Reviewing items of previous research). In Move 2, the writers justify their study by means of Step 1A (Counter-claiming), Step 1B (Indicating a gap), Step 1C (Question-raising) or Step 1C (Continuing a tradition). Finally, Move 3 presents the research through Step 1A (Outlining purposes), Step 1B (Announcing present research), Step 2 (Announcing principal findings) or Step 3 (Indicating RA structure).

In response to the findings in more recent research (e.g. Anthony; Samraj) and changes in the genre itself over time, Swales (*Research*) proposed a revised model that basically involves the reduction of the number of possible steps in Moves 1 and 2, and the inclusion of further steps in Move 3. In this more recent version, Swales takes on board the potential cycling of Moves 1 and 2 sequences, and the fact that citations (Reviewing items of previous research) are not restricted to Move 1 but may occur throughout the whole Introduction. Therefore, he proposes that this Step 3 (Move 1) should not be considered any longer as a separate element of an independent move. He also points out the difficulties inherent in making a distinction between Move 1-Step 1 (Claiming centrality) and Move 1-Step 2 (Making topic generalizations) since, on many occasions, it is difficult to tell whether the main function of the authors is to highlight the importance of the research or to report what is known about the topic of their research, as illustrated in the following example taken from our own corpus:

- (1) Novel biological therapeutics that target specific cytokines are emerging as agents that are capable of controlling inflammation in autoimmune disorders. (Eng. Med. 1)

Therefore, Swales eliminates Step 1 from Move 1 and only leaves Step 2 as performing the function of both steps. This is labelled “Topic generalizations of increasing specificity”. As regards Move 2, Swales also removes Step 1D (Continuing a tradition) since it seems to him a “rather odd choice of nomenclature” (Swales, *Research* 229) and proposes “Adding to what is known” instead. He, furthermore,



argues that “Counter claiming” and “Question-raising” perform a similar function to “Indicating a gap” and, consequently, suggests that the first two can be subsumed under “Indicating a gap”. Additionally, taking into consideration Samraj’s findings, he includes another optional step in Move 2 (Presenting positive evaluation) which typically follows a gap indication. Regarding Move 3, Swales (*Research*) recognises the difficulty of separating a purposive statement of Step 1A (Outlining purposes) and Step 1B (Announcing present research) and puts forward the fusion of both steps into one that he labels “Announcing present research descriptively and/or purposively.” In this revised version, Swales keeps the other two remaining steps of his 1990 model (*Genre Analysis*), although he uses a new wording: “Announcing principal outcomes” and “Outlining the structure of the paper”. Finally, he adds four further optional steps (Presenting research questions or hypotheses, Definitional clarifications, Summarizing methods, and Stating the value of the present research).

## 2.2. A PROPOSED MODEL FOR ANALYSING PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES IN RA INTRODUCTIONS

For the purposes of analysing comparatively the promotional strategies in RA Introductions, as we do in the present study, we consider that some points of Swales (*Research*) model should be modified so as to better specify the different degrees of rhetorical promotion and levels of face-threatening acts involved in the writers’ process of creating a research space.

Regarding Move 1, we consider it appropriate to establish a difference between those communicative categories which have a prevalent function of claiming centrality (Claiming importance of the research topic) and those in which the prevalent function is merely the reporting of what is known about the research topic (Reviewing previous research), since the levels of promotional value clearly differ. Although we acknowledge, as mentioned above, the difficulty inherent, on some occasions, in making a distinction between these two steps, we have opted for classifying as examples of “Claiming importance of research topic” those instances in which the authors include explicit lexical items that boost the relevance of the research topic and that, therefore, contain an added value of promotion (e.g. *interest, increasing attention, considerable revival, significant role, innovative, essential, particularly important*) as in the following examples:

- (2) Despite the *established value* of examining CHD risk factors in childhood (Berenson et al., 1992; Newman et al., 1986), there is a dearth of information about the association between central adiposity and cardiovascular reactivity in adolescents. (Engl. Psych. 10)
- (3) *Growing interest* in S1P *has been increased* by the discovery of a family of distinct G-protein-coupled receptors, which originally were designated endothelial differentiation gene receptors. (Engl. Med. 13)



In relation to Move 2, we agree that “Question-raising” has the same function as “Indicating a gap” and, therefore, should be reduced to just one step; but we believe that it is useful to maintain a distinction between “Indicating a gap” and “Counter-claiming” since the rhetorical effect is different. By indicating a gap, the authors merely point out that more research needs to be done in that specific area of knowledge. Counter-claiming, however, is a more face-threatening act which encompasses the criticism (in a direct or indirect manner) of the other members of the research community. We, therefore, propose a model in which a distinction prevails between those cases where there is a criticism addressed to the research community, by stating the methodology flaws or the limitations of previous research (Criticising previous studies), and those cases in which there is a gap creation function (Indicating a gap in existing literature). We have also included a new step in between these two (Reporting contradictory findings), which corresponds to those communicative events in which the authors report on the inconsistent findings in the literature, as a way of justifying their own research. This step we see as having a weaker threatening rhetorical effect than “Criticising previous studies” but stronger than “Indicating a gap”, as seen in the following examples:

- (4) Some studies support the notion that alcohol use is related to sexual risk-taking, whereas others find no relation [...]. Based on the inconsistent findings in the literature, we attempted to replicate past studies using... (Psych. Engl. 3)
- (5) Algunos investigadores han encontrado que la tasa de recurrencia de la criocirugía es menor o igual que la observada en cirugía convencional y radioterapia; sin embargo, otros mencionan que es un método de tratamiento menos efectivo y con resultados cosméticos no siempre buenos. En consideración a la controversia sobre la efectividad de esta técnica, decidimos realizar... (Med. Span. 11)

As regards Move 3 (Step 2), we also consider that a distinction should be established between those cases in which the authors present research questions and those in which hypotheses are put forward. In the former, it seems that the main function is simply to announce the purpose of the investigation, whereas in the latter, the main function seems to be equivalent to the announcement of principal findings (if the hypotheses become confirmed), especially in those cases in which the authors use the verbs *predict*, *anticipate* and *expect*, as in the following examples:

- (6) At the general association level, the alcohol and risky sex link was *predicted* to be stronger for individuals who did not have a regular partner. The association between alcohol use and sexual behavior at the event level was also *expected* to be strongest for events with a new partner. (Psych. Engl. 3)
- (7) We *anticipated* that the long-interval treatment condition would produce significantly better health outcomes than the short-interval control condition. (Psych. Engl. 8)



Since we, therefore, perceive a different degree of promotional value, in our adapted model we have included the instances of “research questions” as part of Move 3 (Step 1), whereas the instances of “hypotheses” are reported as a separate step.

Finally, we should point out that a preliminary analysis of the article Introductions that make up the corpus of the present study revealed that there were no instances of the step “Presenting positive justification” (Move 2) nor of the steps “Definitional clarifications”, “Summarizing methods” and “Outlining the structure of the paper” (Move 3) as proposed in Swales (*Research*) model. Consequently, since these steps do not seem to be operative in the disciplines analysed in this study in either of the languages, we decided not to include them as part of the adapted model, as seen in Fig.1.

<p><b>Move 1 Establishing the research context</b> (citations required)</p> <p>via</p> <p>Step 1* <i>Claiming importance of the research topic</i></p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Step 2 <i>Reviewing the research topic</i></p>
<p><b>Move 2 Creating a research space</b> (citations possible)</p> <p>via</p> <p>Step 1A** <i>Criticising previous studies</i></p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Step 1B <i>Reporting contradictory findings</i></p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Step 1C <i>Indicating a gap in existing literature</i></p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Step 1D <i>Adding to what is known</i></p>
<p><b>Move 3 Presenting the research</b> (citations possible)</p> <p>via</p> <p>Step 1* <i>Announcing present research (descriptively and/or purposively)</i></p> <p>Step 2 <i>Presenting hypotheses</i></p> <p>Step 3 <i>Announcing principal outcomes</i></p> <p>Step 4 <i>Stating the value of the present research</i></p>

\* The degree of promotional value is decreasing from Step 1-2 (Move 1) and increasing from Step 1-4 (Move 3)

\*\*The degree of the face-threatening act is decreasing from Step 1A-1D (Move 2)

Fig. 1. Adapted model from Swales (*Research*) for analysing comparatively (across languages and disciplines) promotional strategies in RA Introductions.

### 2.3. PROCEDURES

The move analyses of the texts recorded were firstly carried out independently by each of the authors and then compared. In each case complete agreement was reached after discussion. In those cases in which discrepancies occurred, we





resorted to the assistance of a specialist informant in each discipline. With regard to the identification of move boundaries and the assignment of discourse values to the various moves and steps, our approach was primarily based on semantic or functional criteria rather than formal criteria. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that, on those occasions in which there was ambiguity, linguistic exponents were particularly useful in the identification of certain moves. Clearly the analyses of rhetorico-pragmatic features always involve a certain degree of subjectivity that is perhaps unavoidable, but this was kept to a minimum in the study reported here.

### 3. RESULTS

The findings obtained in the present analysis of the promotional strategies employed by the English and Spanish writers in Psychology and Medicine research papers, as seen in Tables 1 and 2, revealed that, overall, the Introduction section of the English texts exhibits a higher degree of promotion in both disciplines. This is seen in the higher frequency of occurrence of the most promotional steps associated with each of the moves in the English texts, especially in Psychology, as compared to the Spanish texts.

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF MOVES  
IN THE INTRODUCTION SECTION OF THE PSYCHOLOGY TEXTS

	NUMBER OF ENGLISH INTRODUCTIONS	NUMBER OF SPANISH INTRODUCTIONS
<b>Move 1 Establishing the research context</b>	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
Step 1 <i>Claiming importance of the research topic</i>	13	8
Step 2 <i>Reviewing the research topic</i>	20	20
<b>Move 2 Creating a research space</b>	20 (100%)	12 (60%)
Step 1A <i>Criticising previous studies</i>	11	4
Step 1B <i>Reporting contradictory findings</i>	5	2
Step 1C <i>Indicating a gap in existing literature</i>	15	7
Step 1D <i>Adding to what is known</i>	6	–
<b>Move 3 Presenting the research</b>	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
Step 1 <i>Announcing present research</i>	20	20
Step 2 <i>Presenting hypotheses</i>	13	4
Step 3 <i>Announcing principal outcomes</i>	1	–
Step 4 <i>Stating the value of the present research</i>	9	2





TABLE 2. FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF MOVES IN THE INTRODUCTION SECTION OF THE MEDICINE TEXTS

	NUMBER OF ENGLISH INTRODUCTIONS	NUMBER OF SPANISH INTRODUCTIONS
<b>Move 1 Establishing the research context</b>	<b>20 (100%)</b>	<b>20 (100%)</b>
Step 1 <i>Claiming importance of the research topic</i>	9	1
Step 2 <i>Reviewing the research topic</i>	20	20
<b>Move 2 Creating a research space</b>	<b>17 (85%)</b>	<b>10 (50%)</b>
Step 1A <i>Criticising previous studies</i>	5	1
Step 1B <i>Reporting contradictory findings</i>	8	4
Step 1C <i>Indicating a gap in existing literature</i>	7	6
Step 1D <i>Adding to what is known</i>	1	–
<b>Move 3 Presenting the research</b>	<b>20 (100%)</b>	<b>20 (100%)</b>
Step 1 <i>Announcing present research</i>	19	19
Step 2 <i>Presenting hypotheses</i>	4	1
Step 3 <i>Announcing principal outcomes</i>	4	4
Step 4 <i>Stating the value of the present research</i>	8	3

Initial Move 1 is an obligatory communicative category which occurs in all the Introductions analysed. In all the texts, the writers made use of Step 2 (Reviewing the research topic) as a means of establishing the background of their research field. However, the incidence of occurrence of the other more promotional strategy in this move, namely Step 1 (Claiming importance of the research topic), varied mainly across the two disciplines: in the Psychology texts, 13 instances (65%) were reported in English and 8 (40%) in Spanish, as opposed to 9 (45%) in English and 1 (5%) in Spanish, in the Medicine texts.

Move 3 is another communicative category that occurred in all the Introductions analysed, being predominantly realised through Step 1 (Announcing present research). However, the frequency of occurrence of the other three steps associated with this move, and which present a higher degree of promotional value, varied across the two disciplines and languages: Step 2 (Presenting hypothesis) seems to be a more popular option among the English Psychology texts, since it was used in 13 Introductions (65%) of the sample texts. The frequency of occurrence of this step was similar both in the English Medicine texts and the Spanish Psychology ones (4 instances -20%-), whereas in the Spanish Medicine texts only 1 Introduction (5%) exhibited this use. Conversely, Step 3 (Announcing principal findings) was reported more frequently in Medicine (4 instances -20%- in both languages) in opposition to the only instance (5%) that was found in the English Psychology texts. No instances of this step occurred in the Spanish Psychology sample. It is worth men-

tioning that in one of the Spanish Medicine texts, the findings were presented in two tables at the end of the Introduction. This represents an atypical strategy of persuasion used as an attention-catching device, motivating the reader to read further to understand how the researcher arrived at the findings later reported extensively in the Results section. Mostly, in the rest of the cases, the information concerning the findings consisted of only a brief statement, as seen in the following examples:

- (8) In agreement with results of several fibroblast cell lines S1P induced proliferation of primary fibroblasts. Moreover, matrix protein formation by S1P was observed. (Med. Engl. 13)
- (9) Participants with dysfunctional attitudes showed increases in depressed mood following a negative admission outcome because they developed both a negative view of the self and the future. (Psych. Engl. 13)

As regards final Step 4 (Stating the value of the present research) in Move 3, it constitutes the step with the highest degree of rhetorical promotion. It is here that writers emphasise the value of their research for the disciplinary community. On some occasions the writers opted for enhancing the implications of their research in a tentative way through the use of hedging devices, mainly epistemic modality, as in the following examples:

- (10) Sensitizing clinicians to the morbidity of the disease *may help improve* psoriasis management. This insight *may allow the clinician to offer patients more effective* therapies. (Med. Engl. 2)
- (11) En estos casos la biopsia de dichas lesiones y el estudio histopatológico posterior *puede ser de gran ayuda* diagnóstica. (Med. Span. 6)

On other occasions, however, the importance and novelty of the research is directly put forward in a bid to convince readers of the validity of their claims.

- (12) Because this study examines the entire NPF patient population, these findings are *especially important*. (Med. Engl. 2)
- (13) These results further emphasize the functional *importance* of the nonhelical tail domains of keratin molecules. (Med. Engl. 8)
- (14) We used a *novel* variation on the naturalistic approach, by evaluating the relationship between life stress and a range of eating behaviors. (Psych. Engl. 6)

We also found a few instances in which the value of the research is enhanced by comparison to previous work.



- (15) Thus, our study adds to the small literature base and *improves on past studies* in a number of ways. (Psych. Engl. 1)
- (16) Nuestro meta-análisis *no es una mera réplica de los anteriores* ya que, en primer lugar limitamos nuestro periodo de búsqueda desde el año [...]. En segundo lugar, nos centramos principalmente en los distintos subtipos de fobia social [...]. En tercer lugar, limitamos los estudios al contexto europeo [...]. En cuarto lugar, aplicamos técnicas de meta-análisis más potentes que ponderan [...]. Finalmente, incluimos estudios realizados en lengua castellana, que no suelen estar representados en los meta-análisis ya realizados sobre este tema. (Psych. Span. 8)

There were also instances in which the writers explicitly mention the uniqueness of their work by expressing the novelty that their research represents for the disciplinary community.

- (17) Advancing beyond our previous research (Kalichman et al. 2002), this study is *the first* that we are aware of to examine the association between Internet use and coping and social support in people living with HIV/AIDS. (Psych. Engl. 5)
- (18) Currently, no study can be found in the literature that has directly examined the relationship between TAF and schizotypy. The present investigation was *a first attempt* to address this issue. (Psych. Engl. 15)
- (19) This report is *the first* in a series on the prevalence of these conditions found. (Med. Engl. 3)

The high level of competitiveness, especially in the Psychology field, is well illustrated in the following example in which the authors are forced to enhance the value of their work with the aim of creating a gap which justifies their research, even though it implies the criticism of their peers.

- (20) During the course of the current research, Gilbert and colleagues (2001) reported that self-criticism was related to entrapment and to poorer social comparison. Therefore, these investigators partially addressed similar questions but did not have a validated measure of the self-critical personality style. The present study used the Depressive Experiences Questionnaire (Blatt et al., 1976), the most widely used instrument to assess self-criticism. (Psych. Engl. 20)

As seen in the example above, in order to convince the readers of the importance of the research, writers typically need to previously emphasise their work by creating a research space. This is achieved by means of Move 2 which is mainly realized via four steps (see Fig. 1). The use of these steps clearly involves a certain



degree of face-threatening act which is decreasing from steps 1A to 1C. In relation to the frequency of occurrence of this Move 2, a striking difference between the two languages was found. In English, it was reported in 100% of the Psychology texts and in 85% of the Medicine texts. This indicates that it is an obligatory move in this language. In Spanish, however, this move seems to be optional as it was used in 60% of the Psychology texts and in only 50% of the Medicine texts.

A more popular option in all groups of texts was, as seen in Tables 1 and 2, the realization of Move 2 via Step 1C (Indicating a gap in existing literature) to point out the possible topics or areas that still need research in relation to previous work. The majority of the examples of this step typically consisted of a short statement, especially in Spanish, and was often initiated with an adversative conjunction:

- (21) El mecanismo de acción de los antibióticos no está aclarado suficientemente. (Med. Span. 3)
- (22) However, very little is known about the nature of the membrane transporters involved in either acid secretion or the regulation of intracellular pH. (Med. Engl. 11)

As regards the use of Step 1A, the writers in the English Psychology texts engaged far more frequently than the authors of the other groups of texts in criticising one's peers as a way of justifying their research. This is illustrated in the following example:

- (23) An important limitation of Treiber's (1998) study is that the sample was restricted to adolescents with a family history of hypertension, which significantly limited the generalizability of the study of population at large. In addition, the author did not examine race differences in this association. (Psych. Engl. 10)

Another preferred rhetorical strategy, especially in the English Medicine texts, was the use of Step 1B (Reporting contradictory findings), which also serves as a way of justifying research but also involves a lessened degree of threat. As for the use of Step 1D (Adding to what is known), by means of which writers present their work as a continuation of a previous research topic, although 6 instances (30%) were reported in the English Psychology sample, only one example (5%) was found in the English Medicine texts and no instances were reported in Spanish in any of the disciplines. The low level of incidence of this step can arguably be attributed to its low degree of rhetorical force in the creation of a research space.

- (24) The present study complemented these theoretical developments. It aimed to further elucidate the nature of staff beliefs and feelings about challenging behaviour. (Psych. Engl. 19)



We should, finally, point out that overall the English Introductions in both related subdisciplines are quite homogeneous in terms of length and rhetorical structure, whereas the Spanish Introductions, although they seem to conform to a great extent to the international rhetorical norms, present a greater variety... For instance, two of the Spanish Psychology texts (n. 2 and 5) include the aims of the study and the working hypothesis as part of a following section of Methods, under the subheading “Objetivos e Hipótesis”; in another text (n. 14) Move 3 is included as part of the Methods section under the subheading “Descripción y Justificación”, and in n. 20, Move 3 appears as an independent section after the Introduction and before the Methods section under the heading “Objetivos”. In the middle of the Introductions n. 11 and 20, a figure with explanatory graphs and a table are included, respectively. Similarly, the Spanish Medicine Introduction present some examples of atypical structure: text 4 is divided into several subsections under different subheadings (Definición, Antecedentes históricos, Manifestaciones clínicas, Histología, Formas clínicas) and the aims of the study, much the same as in text 19, are presented in an independent, follow-on section (“Objetivos”). In text n. 7 the main findings are presented in two tables at the end of the Introduction; and the sequence of moves in text n. 12 (M3 + M1) does not follow the typical linear structure.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Our results suggest that, when presenting their research, in both subfields of Clinical and Health Psychology, and Dermatology, for the English-speaking writers the RA Introduction is viewed to a greater extent as a promotional genre than it is by the Spanish academics, inasmuch as the overall frequency of occurrence of promotional strategies is higher in the English texts. However, even within the same language, some degree of cross-disciplinary variation was noted, as seen in Fig. 2.

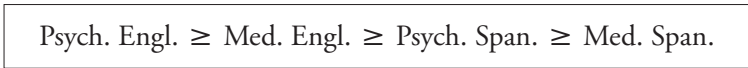


Fig. 2. Degree of rhetorical promotion across subdisciplines and languages.

It seems that the need to promote one's work and to create a research space in order to justify publication is greater among the members of the international English-speaking Psychology community, since the Introductions in this field, overall, present the highest degree of rhetorical promotion (Moves 1 and 3) and engage more frequently in criticising previous work (Move 2). This tendency is followed on a continuum by the English Medicine texts, in which writers use a slightly higher number of promotional strategies and put their faces more at risk than the writers in the Spanish Psychology Introductions. Finally, the Spanish Medicine texts present the lowest amount of promotional strategies and face-threatening speech acts.



Whereas intercultural variation can be explained in terms of the different levels of competition to publish in the national and international arenas, cross-disciplinary variation can be accounted for by the influence of discourse practices in specific professional subcultures. It should be noted, however, that when both of these variables are considered, it is not clear, as Yakhontova points out, how professional and national cultural factors interact in particular languages and fields, although the results obtained in this study indicate that in shaping the rhetorical and promotional features of the genre in question, cultural factors tend to override the influence of disciplinary conventions.

In today's context of academic globalisation, being heard internationally is regarded essential and, therefore, an adequate use of promotional strategies becomes a central issue especially for speakers of English as an additional language. Although it seems that Spanish writers in the fields analysed in this study are familiar, to a certain extent, with the rhetorical practices of the international English-speaking scientific community, it would be interesting to study in further research to what extent Spanish academics modify their preferred national rhetorical practices in order to meet the expectations of their particular reference disciplinary communities in an international publication context.

## WORKS CITED

- ADNAN, Zifirdaus. "Discourse Structure of Indonesian Research Article Introductions in Selected Hard Sciences." *English as an Additional Language in Research Publication and Communication*. Ed. S. Burgess, and P. Martín-Martín. Bern: Peter Lang, 2008. 39-63.
- AHMAD, Ummul K. "Research Article Introductions in Malay: Rhetoric in an Emerging Research Community." *Culture and Styles in Academic Discourse*. Ed. A. Duszak. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997. 273-303.
- ANTHONY, Laurence. "Writing Research Article Introductions in Software Engineering: How Accurate Is a Standard Model?." *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* 42.1 (1999): 38-46.
- BURGESS, Sally. "Packed Houses and Intimate Gatherings: Audience and Rhetorical Structure." *Academic Discourse*. Ed. J. Flowerdew. Harlow: Longman, 2002. 196-215.
- BURGESS, Sally and Anna F. FAGAN. "(Kid) Gloves On or Off? Academic Conflict in Research Articles across the Disciplines." *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 44 (2002): 79-96.
- DUSZAK, Anna. "Academic Discourse and Intellectual Styles." *Journal of Pragmatics* 21 (1994): 291-313.
- FAIRCLOUGH, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman, 1995.
- FAKHRI, Ahmed. "Rhetorical Properties of Arabic Research Article Introductions." *Journal of Pragmatics* 36 (2004): 1119-1138.
- FREDRICKSON, Kirstin M. and John M. SWALES. "Competition and Discourse Community: Introductions from Nysvenska Studies." *Text and Talk in Professional Contexts: Selected Papers from the International Conference "Discourse and the Professions"*. Ed. B.L. Gunnarsson, P. Linell, and B. Nordberg. Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1994. 9-21.



- HUNSTON, Susan. "Professional Conflict: Disagreement in Academic Discourse." *Text and Technology: In Honor of John Sinclair*. Ed. M. Baker, G. Francis and E. Tognini-Bonelli. Amsterdam: Johns Benjamins, 1993. 115-133.
- HYLAND, Ken. *Disciplinary Discourse: Social Interactions in Academic Writing*. Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000.
- KANOKSILAPATHAM, Budsaba. "Rhetorical Structure of Biochemistry Research Articles." *English for Specific Purposes* 24.3 (2005): 269-292.
- MYERS, Greg. "The Pragmatics of Politeness in Scientific Articles." *Applied Linguistics* 10 (1989): 1-35.
- NWOGU, Kevin Ngozi. "The Medical Research Papers: Structure and Functions." *English for Specific Purposes* 16.2 (1997): 119-138.
- OZTURK, Ismet. "The Textual Organisation of Research Article Introductions in Applied Linguistics: Variability within a Single Discipline." *English for Specific Purposes* 26.1 (2007): 25-38.
- POSTEGUILLO, Santiago. "The Schematic Structure of Computer Science Research Articles." *English for Specific Purposes* 18.2 (1999): 139-160.
- SALAGER-MEYER, Françoise. "The Rationale Behind Academic Conflict: From Outright Criticism to Contextual 'Niche' Creation." *UNESCO-ALSED LSP* 21 (1998): 4-23.
- SAMRAJ, Betty. "Introductions in Research Articles: Variations across Disciplines." *English for Specific Purposes* 21.1 (2002): 1-17.
- SHEHZAD, Wasima. "Move Two: Establishing a Niche." *IBÉRICA* 15 (2008): 25-49.
- SWALES, John M. *Aspects of Article Introductions*. Birmingham: Aston University, The Languages Studies Unit, 1981.
- *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- *Research Genres: Explorations and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- TAYLOR, Gordon and Chen TINGGUANGT. "Linguistic, Cultural, and Subcultural Issues in Contrastive Discourse Analysis: Anglo-American and Chinese Scientific Texts." *Applied Linguistics* 12.3 (1991): 319-336.
- RUIYING, Yang and Desmond ALLISON. "Research Articles in Applied Linguistics: Moving from Results to Conclusions." *English for Specific Purposes* 22.4 (2003): 365-385.
- YAKHONTOVA, Tatyana. "Cultural and Disciplinary Variation in Academic Discourse: The Issue of Influencing Factors." *English for Academic Purposes* 5.2 (2006): 153-167.







# SCIENTIFIC WRITING ASSISTANCE FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH: SHIFTING RIGHT ON THE INTERACTIVITY SPECTRUM

Ray Cooke  
Susan Birch-Becaas  
Université Victor Segalen Bordeaux 2

## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the issue of how non-native speaking (NNS) scientists manage to get their work published despite the linguistic and procedural difficulties that they face, and in particular, looks at the means and tools available to do this. The authors pinpoint certain conditions that could be met in order to allow NNS scientists easier access to the “gate-kept” world of publishing in English. Finally, they describe how available tools to help such authors have progressively shifted right on the interactivity spectrum.

KEY WORDS: NNS scientists, publishing research, gate-kept access, online writing assistance.

## RESUMEN

En el presente artículo se analizan los mecanismos que permiten a los científicos cuya lengua madre no es el inglés publicar sus trabajos de investigación a pesar de las dificultades lingüísticas y de procedimiento con las que suelen enfrentarse. En particular, se revisan los recursos y herramientas disponibles para lograr dicho objetivo y se señalan ciertas condiciones que deberían cumplirse para facilitar el acceso de estos investigadores al restringido mundo de las publicaciones en inglés. Por último, se ofrece una descripción de cómo el grado de interactividad en relación con el uso de las herramientas existentes ha ido aumentando progresivamente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: científicos hablantes de inglés como lengua internacional, publicación de trabajos de investigación, acceso restringido, ayuda online para autores.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has long been the dominant language in the world of research and at present, almost all scientific research articles are written in English. Both novice and more experienced researchers the world over have to write in English for their work to be published. While publishing in English is the only way for these researchers to establish themselves as expert members of their discourse community,



their results need to be made available to the widest readership possible. Hyland sums up the situation as follows: “countless students and academics around the world must now gain fluency in the conventions of English language academic discourse to understand their disciplines, to establish their careers and to successfully navigate their learning” (Hyland, *English* 24). Those hardest hit by what Benfield and Feak term the “English language burden” are of course the researchers for whom English is not their native language. The problems faced by these researchers have been well documented and summarised by Flowerdew (“Writing”) and Uzuner. Non-native speaking (NNS) authors are at an obvious disadvantage as they have to structure their papers according to cultural norms and conventions which are not their own and, of course, the time taken to draft an article is longer. The task is even more difficult for those researchers who live and work “on the periphery” or “off-network” (Belcher) as they may not have had any training in scientific writing (Salager-Meyer), they may not have access to assistance from native speakers (Li and Flowerdew) or they may not have the funding necessary to collaborate with an author’s editor (Flowerdew, “Scholarly”).

## 2. PREVIOUS AND RECENT TRENDS

A number of recommendations and suggestions have been made recently in order to assist NNS researchers with the publication of their research. Salager-Meyer stresses the importance of open-access to journals for researchers in developing countries and the first International PRISEAL Conference (Publishing and Presenting Research Internationally: Issues for Speakers of English as an Additional Language) at the Universidad de La Laguna, Tenerife in 2007 has also led to a statement on equitable access to the international academy. Salager-Meyer also underlines the need to develop initiatives whereby experienced researchers would help authors in the developing world to publish by providing editorial assistance and acting as mentors. The issue has also received attention from an editor-in-chief of a medical journal. Charlton suggests that NNS scientists should be permitted to construct papers using a substantial number of direct quotations from the already-published scientific literature. He argues that the result should be better than insisting that scientists of poor linguistic competence be compelled to re-phrase and recombine concepts which have already been well-expressed elsewhere in the scientific literature. Of course, ideally NNS researchers would have their manuscripts re-read by both an experienced peer and a language specialist as advocated by Flowerdew (“Scholarly”) and Benfield, but this is not always feasible especially in developing countries.

There is, therefore, a need for tools and materials to be developed to help NNS authors with writing up research. Previous research has provided valuable input for writing courses. Genre analysis studies have provided model moves which NNS researchers can follow (Swales; Hopkins and Dudley-Evans) and more recently other research genres such as letters to the editor have been studied (Magnet and Carnet). Other studies have focused on prominent language features of the



research article, and contrastive studies have also helped to illustrate how different cultures may organise their research according to different norms, with recent studies on Italian writers (Giannoni 2008), Sudanese authors (El Malik and Nesi) and French authors (Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas). However, with the exception of textbooks such as those by Swales and Feak (*Academic Writing, English in Today's Research World*) and Weissberg and Buker, there are few pedagogical materials available for graduate students and researchers. They do not have the time to study the comprehensive style manuals available, and the “instructions to authors” provided by journals almost never give any readily transposable advice about the grammatical and strategic issues involved in drafting scientific English.

A recent trend has been the move towards the study of large corpora of academic discourse. Concordancing tools can be used to identify key words, recurrent grammatical structures, collocations and to draw up word lists. However, Tribble has warned against the use of vast corpora such as those used by lexicographers and descriptive linguists which, “while it may be valid for these communities, does not necessarily meet the needs of teachers and learners in EAP programs.” (Tribble 132). He advocates constructing a corpus with the type of texts that learners need to write: “the generalisations which they are able to make can be incorporated into their own written production” (ibid: 146). Flowerdew too has called for corpora of texts from the students’ own environment that reflect their writing tasks “exploiting small ‘localised’ expert corpora for pedagogic purposes” (Flowerdew, *Corpus-Based* 134). The approach then should be to combine the bottom-up approach with a top-down analysis of the macro-structure of texts as in Flowerdew’s study of problem-solution texts (*Corpus-Based Analyses*) or Hyland’s study (“Activity”) of reporting practices. Charles too argues that lexico-grammatical patterns revealed in corpora need to be associated with their functions in the discourse, “the use of corpus consultation to explore a series of lexico-grammatical patterns does not in itself add up to a coherent set of teaching materials” (Charles, “Reconciling” 290). It would therefore seem that smaller corpora that can be examined manually and processed didactically may reveal interesting results and applications for the learner and EAP instructor. This raises the question as to what type of model NNS learners could follow.

### 3. ACCEPTABILITY AND GAINING ACCEPTANCE

This issue of how to define what is an acceptable level of English for publication has been raised both by Salager-Meyer and Flowerdew (“Scholarly”). NNS researchers should not be expected to produce native-like discourse but articles which are sufficiently clearly written to move forward to the review process. At the same time, editors should be encouraged to tolerate more “deviation” and “linguistic peculiarities” (Salager-Meyer 126). Indeed as Salager-Meyer points out, the distinction between novice and expert writing may be more relevant than that between native-speaker and non-native speaker productions. So far the tendency has been to study native-speaker corpora but it is perhaps as realistic for NNS authors



to imitate their successful NNS peers who have succeeded in being published. We would argue that NNS texts which have been re-read by an author's editor and accepted for publication can be used as a realistic goal for novice researchers to achieve.

While it is one thing to write correct English, it is another to negotiate one's way through the submission and acceptance process. Pitfalls abound. On the authors' side—and to name but a few— there is: not adopting the journal's "house style" or respecting the Instructions to Authors contained in every journal; lacking concision; not using linguistic devices likely to highlight the salient points of one's research; not paying attention to the form of certain documents accompanying the main item submitted. The situation would be difficult enough if it were not for the fact that, on the journals' side, matters have also become stricter: as many as five reviewers to satisfy; further experiments or statistical tests required; bibliographical references to be added; and, last but not least, level of English to be improved. Indeed, perseverance and toeing the line tended ultimately to prove fruitful and lead to publication in a study of NNS submissions to *English for Specific Purposes* (Belcher).

While these factors are perhaps the visible barriers to publishing in English, others lie in wait. If sufficient financial resources were available to outsource a problematic manuscript to a reputable scientific sub-editing agency, it is likely that it would gain not only linguistically but also structurally, since both form and function would probably be commented upon and corrected. However, being off-network probably means lacking the financial resources to outsource, and even lacking the human resources (proficient thesis supervisor, reliable peers, etc.) that could offset the problem. An even more unquantifiable but potentially damaging factor in the long term could also be the attribution of an off-network thesis supervisor at the outset of one's doctoral studies. These are just some of the obstacles faced by NNS researchers in the quest to pass by the gatekeepers of English-language journals.

Indeed, if one attempts to summarize the present situation regarding publishing in English-language journals, a particular word springs to mind: pressure. There can be no doubt that publishing in English-language journals is not getting any easier, especially for NNS researchers. Years of personal observation<sup>1</sup> lead to the conclusion that the pressure under which NNS researchers find themselves has steadily increased over the years. First, every country in the world maintaining a policy of funding state research lays down stringent requirements that researchers must meet with regard to the volume and type of publications that they are called upon to contribute to the accrual of center knowledge, i.e. the knowledge on which the mainstream scientific community is founded. France is also taking that avenue at present with the result that pressures are building in the research community. Indeed, a French government think-tank recently projected a 10% increase in the

---

<sup>1</sup> 25 years of experience helping researchers in a life sciences university to get their research published in English.

number of doctoral students in France between 2006 and 2015, the figure rising to 15% for the hard sciences and the health sector.<sup>2</sup> Second, there is a growing tendency for the number of reviewers of submitted papers to be increasing. The journals with the greatest impact factor tend to have the largest number for reasons of scientific credibility. However, meeting with the approval of 4 or even 5 reviewers may not be easy, especially for NNS researchers likely to commit slight but annoying mistakes in English. This can only add to the pressure on their shoulders. The corollary is that a manuscript should be well written from the outset... or risk outright rejection, irrespective of the value of the science that it may contain but of which the editor-in-chief may perhaps be unaware. Furthermore, there is evidence that, with some rare exceptions, editors no longer can afford to take the time that they may previously have taken to rectify the faulty language of NNS researchers.<sup>3</sup> This is understandable given the sheer volume of work falling on their shoulders in an era where they may have to deal simultaneously with both paper and electronic publications. For a number of reasons, therefore, researchers and editors alike are coming under increasing pressure in an ever more competitive research world.

Appropriate language training well upstream in a young researcher's career<sup>4</sup> might considerably alleviate the problem. In France, however, practices differ widely for reasons beyond the scope of this paper, some doctoral students having received, and continuing to receive, fully appropriate training in academic writing, with others receiving none at all. If the institution fails at this level, the problem of disseminating one's research becomes an even more uphill one. In this context, writing up research can be a solitary frustrating experience, since fledgling researchers are expected to play a game whose rules may be known to them, but for which they may be ill-equipped in terms of skills. Who, or rather what, can they turn to?

To answer this question, it is important first to consider in what circumstances researchers write up their research. Anyone who has set foot in a research laboratory will know that researchers' workstations tend to be rather cramped places with papers, notes and articles set around a computer screen and keyboard. In fact, the question of how researchers write up research probably involves as many ergonomic issues as it does linguistic factors. In a recent discussion, one researcher mentioned to the authors of this paper that he strews around his table top all the downloaded pdf versions of articles relevant to his own subject, sets dictionaries next to them, and then tries to "imitate the style of well-known authors" in his domain. Such personal resourcefulness merits research in its own right and might reveal some interesting process-driven insights for EAP practitioners. For example,

---

<sup>2</sup> B. Leseur, Projections à long terme des principales filières de l'enseignement supérieur: rentrées de 2006 à 2015, dans *Education et Formation* n° 74 [MEN], <<http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/02/4/5024.pdf>>.

<sup>3</sup> See «How Authors Learn Writing Skills,” Listserv Discussion Forum of World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), <<http://www.wame.org>>.

<sup>4</sup> This could consist in well-planned ESP courses from Master's level up.



in a study of 13 Japanese researchers (Okamura), only 5 paid direct attention to mastering English speakers' language use, the others simply resorting to piecemeal observation and attempted imitation of what they read day in and day out in their profession. Whether these findings can be extrapolated to other national groups remains to be established. In any case, the tools that linguists make available to researchers to meet their needs have until now been linguistically oriented, and have by and large paid less attention to the ergonomic and cognitive needs of those for whom they are intended.

#### 4. INTERACTIVITY AND EXISTING APPROACHES

We shall now turn our attention to the notion of interactivity. The term can have many meanings but it is human-computer interaction that the following discussion focuses on. Indeed, we are all aware of how an inadequate online user interface can be so damaging for the browsing and acquisition of otherwise well-founded information. Today's busy researchers need a special kind of help available at their fingertips. Any other presentation format is likely to disinterest them, at least during the phase when they are actually drafting their manuscripts. In a recent study exploring the bibliographic and documentary information (BDI)-seeking behaviour of high-level French neuroscientists, the subjects were asked to specify exactly what they expect from a "good" BDI resource. Characteristics cited as being necessary were: fast, enabling users to master it on their own, exhaustive, interface easy to use, user-friendly and comfortable (Vibert et al.). We shall therefore examine how materials and procedures used until now can be viewed in the light of these requirements. Of course, modalities designed years ago cannot be fairly compared with recent advances, given the infinitely greater calculating power that modern computers offer to programme designers. The sole intention of the discussion below is therefore to demonstrate to what extent such digital materials meet the requirements of NNS scientists.

The simplest approach until now has been to take the contents of a paper book dealing with scientific writing and simply convert them into digital text. This solution, giving users the impression that they are doing nothing other than reading a book on screen, goes no further than the initial paper format. The problem for users is of a cognitive nature. While the search for relevant and reusable information involves the familiar action of turning pages, the extraction and transfer of appropriate structures and occurrences places excessive effort on the cognitive resources of the busy user. In this approach, the macro and micro writing skills required to produce acceptable text are not made available in a readily usable, model-based display. Indeed, it might even be that NNS scientists are likely to glean as much, or even more, pertinent information about scientific text construction simply by reading the scientific articles and other writings that they consult on a regular basis for their work. This hypothesis could be tested in an experiment with two groups matched for age, level and research domain. In any respect, this sort of approach lies well to the left on a progressive interactivity continuum.



Another approach has been to construct what may loosely be termed as “online phrasebooks” that are organized on a functional or notional basis. For example, the contents may include a dozen or so phrases or sentences relating to the notion of working at the laboratory bench. Such online phrasebooks may fall somewhat short of the needs of NNS scientists in their search for the keys to the structural discourse of scientific writing that they need to make them accepted members of their scientific community. The problem is that this sort of approach provides little real assistance since the phrases or sentences they contain remain fixed in stone, making it virtually impossible for the user to appropriate them for his/her own communicative usage. Hence, the degree of interactivity remains low because, once a particular type of occurrence has been consulted and (presumably) modified according to the user’s requirements of the moment, the database no longer serves any immediate purpose.

Another modality has been to approach a single aspect of the issue from the perspective of the course requirements of university students. Many universities throughout the world propose such online assistance in the form of “writing workshops”. Here, the aim is to make information available on some of the genres that budding writers such as NNS scientists need to master, for example, cover letters for résumés. On the other hand, such sites are also likely to contain advice on other purely university-based genres such as dissertation openers and closers, that is, the sort of advice that NNS scientists are less likely to need. Furthermore, a drawback of some writing workshops is that the information contained by such sites may be accrued by faculty members adding files to an existing text corpus, and that at no point in the accrual process does any single contributor go beyond this stage and programme the didactic processing of the corpus necessary for making the database truly interactive in order to allow heuristic learning. Even so, while not being exclusively designed for the NNS user, some writing workshops go well beyond the requirements of the students of their own universities and offer a treasure of procedural information on how a wide range of genres are to be approached, coupling this information with advice on grammar and style guides.<sup>5</sup> Writing workshops may propose interactive feedback for the students of their own universities, and as such represent a step right on the interactive continuum.

Yet another approach, based on a long-time unquestioned tenet of teaching English as a second language, has been to establish the Anglo-Saxon model of English as the target model to be learned and imitated. Online tools using this approach implicitly posit, therefore, that the writings of Anglo-Saxon authors are the only models that others should attempt to imitate. Beyond the debate regarding the hegemony of one model over any others that lies outside the scope of the present paper, it is of note that a significant proportion of the research articles published in the world today come from non Anglo-Saxon countries. While their authors may

---

<sup>5</sup> For example, see The Purdue OWL, <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>, and the University of Toronto writing lab, <<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/advise.html>>.





have sojourned as a PhD student in an Anglo-Saxon country, they likely do not possess oral communication skills fully equivalent to those of a native speaker. On the other hand, their written scientific English, although recognizably not of native-speaker origin, may reach a sufficient level of accuracy to be accepted for publication in the international journals of their specialty. Moreover, due to interlanguage, the phenomenon whereby the members of one language group such as the French are likely to commit similar errors when they write or speak a foreign language such as English owing to interpenetration between the two languages, it paradoxically becomes profitable in learning terms to take NNS productions and to transform them didactically into learning material for particular NNS target groups such as NNS scientists. It is this hitherto largely disregarded approach that the tool described below adopts by highlighting the errors committed by Francophone scientists and transforming them into learning input.

The tool attempts to solve the above-mentioned methodological problems since it allows users to visualize the salient structural and discursive features of written scientific English that, when copied and pasted into a new word-processing file, will make the new manuscript more likely meet the requirements of acceptability for publication, providing the scientific content itself is also of acceptable quality. The tool is constantly active on the screen and users interact regularly with it to draft their own manuscripts. In this regard, it constitutes a further step right on the interactivity continuum.

## 5. TOWARDS AN INTERACTIVE WEB-BASED WRITING TOOL

In this section, we briefly describe the TYOS® (Type Your Own Script) project developed in Bordeaux and how it is used.<sup>6</sup> The objective of TYOS® is to process a small corpus of texts covering several disciplines (medicine, biology, biochemistry, wine science, dentistry, psychology, pharmacology) and encompassing the various genres written by NNS researchers (articles, abstracts, case reports, letters, replies to reviewers, responses as reviewer). The corpus comprises the corrected first drafts of Francophone researchers, not their finally published texts. The rationale and construction of TYOS® have been described elsewhere (Cooke and Birch-Becaas). We believe that this small corpus of “acceptable English” —acceptable in that the drafts were subsequently accepted for publication after further in-house editing from the sub-editors of the journals to which the drafts were submitted— can be used to illustrate how scientific writing functions. The typical language errors of the first drafts can be exploited pedagogically and compared with the text editors’ corrections and reformulations. The learner’s attention can then be drawn to typical features such as frequently used expressions, verb forms, link words and

---

<sup>6</sup> TYOS (Type Your Own Script), <[www.tyos.org](http://www.tyos.org)>.



grammar and vocabulary points that the designers considered noteworthy. In this way, it becomes possible for users to guide themselves as they write. Special attention is paid to the structure of the sub-genres that classically pose problem for NNS scientists, i.e. introductions and discussions.

Let us imagine a real case in point. Doctor Sanchez would like to write an article in which he will report on mesothelioma in workers occupationally exposed to asbestos. He is very familiar with the “building bricks” of his specialty, i.e. the lexical items that cover his field of study. More unfamiliar to him on a structural level, however, will be the “cement” to put the bricks together. Furthermore, he may lack the procedural generic knowledge of why and how sentences follow on from each other, notably in the introduction and discussion of the article he intends to write. This is because, like many researchers worldwide, he may somehow have missed out on acquiring this knowledge during his education, even though some of this knowledge is acquired intuitively by regularly reading the scientific literature. Faced with the task at hand, Doctor Sanchez may spread the major papers on the subject across his desk and settle down for the hours of hard graft that he knows he faces, as he highlights sentences or features in the papers that he thinks he could usefully exploit in his own writing. By consulting TYOS®, Dr. Sanchez would be able to structure his thoughts more clearly and presumably marshal more cognitive resources for the writing process.

The TYOS® corpus contains several full articles that have been processed didactically so that the user can obtain pertinent information on certain key aspects of writing that pose problems to NNS researchers: verb forms, discourse linkers, useful expressions, grammar points, vocabulary and discourse moves. The extract below shows one of the frames in a medical article<sup>7</sup> visible to the user: useful expressions.

A deleterious impact of substance use on the course of psychotic disorders *has been reported by several studies (1-4). However, other studies have suggested that*<sup>1</sup> subjects with a dual diagnosis may present with a less severe form of illness (5-8). These discrepancies may be due to methodological differences in the assessment of outcome, and to the heterogeneity of the samples mixing patients at different stages of the illness. *Convergent findings demonstrate that*<sup>2</sup> subjects with early psychosis present with a high prevalence of substance abuse (9-13). As the first 5-10 years after the onset of psychosis predict the subsequent course of illness (14), *it is of major interest to*<sup>3</sup> identify prognostic factors than can be modified by therapeutic interventions at this stage of illness. *We previously reported in a sample of first-admitted subjects with psychosis that subjects with persisting substance misuse over the follow-up period are more likely to present with suicidal behavior and poorer medication adherence (13, 15). However, we did not explore*<sup>4</sup> the impact of substance and alcohol misuse on the other outcome dimensions. *The aim of the present study was to*<sup>5</sup> further investigate the impact of substance and alcohol misuse on clinical and social outcome over a two-year follow-up after a first hospitalization for psychosis.

---

<sup>7</sup> We thank Professor H el ene Verdoux, Department of Psychiatry, Bordeaux Teaching Hospital, for kindly supplying the draft version discussed in this article.



The *grey highlighting* shows Dr. Sanchez what “cement” he might be able to use from writing previously considered of sufficient quality to move forward to the sub-editing that most journals now undertake before publication. When he passes his cursor over each block of *grey highlighting*, he opens up a bubble containing an explanation why that phrase or occurrence could be re-utilized. For example, on opening the bubble concerning the occurrence “it is of major interest to...” (line 8), he sees the following explanation: “*Says how important it is to do this. Therefore, author justifies his work*”. If Dr. Sanchez then feels that he could reutilize this occurrence, he copies it to a word-processing file and builds the rest of the sentence with the “brick” language he is familiar with. For example, he could write: “it is of major interest to investigate the time lag to the onset of mesothelioma in workers exposed to asbestos”. Other aspects of scientific writing would also typically pose him problem. For example, the change of past tense from line 1 to line 7 might require an explanation. Bubbles would do this in the “verb forms” display. Finally, the macrostructure of the introduction is shown by a discourse analysis display based on Swales’ CARS model (Swales). It then becomes simple for Dr. Sanchez to identify the language of transition from one move to the next and to copy it to his own writing. Hence, by imitating a proven model, it becomes less likely that the finished product will contain errors of a structural or superficial nature that could be a hindrance to the reader.

## 6. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE TOOL

This approach has limitations. First, marking-up texts is a time-consuming process (see Cooke and Birch-Becaas) so there is a problem of critical mass. Moreover, a standardized protocol must be respected by anyone who marks texts. To meet this challenge, the authors are currently working on a semi-automatic flagging system so that the corpus can be extended while maintaining its internal harmony and gaining greater power. Second, the tool still requires add-ons such as suggestions for pedagogical use and an extensive page of links. Third, there are still a number of residual typos and errors in version 1.0, although these are progressively being ironed out. On the other hand, the approach is transposable to other discourse types such as legal and business English, as well as to other languages. In this sense, TYOS® is not only stand-alone or classroom tool but, in the wider sense, is a generic methodology that can be applied in other settings.

The next step will be to transform TYOS® into a full productivity tool offering a wide range of discourse and genre types, coupled with some degree of automation and a set of online user-oriented services. Indeed, tools that will follow will no doubt contain even more in-built interactivity and will represent a further shift right on the interactivity spectrum.



## WORKS CITED

- BELCHER, Diane D. "Seeking Acceptance in an English-Only Research World." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16 (2007): 1-22.
- BENFIELD, John R. "Cardiothoracic Surgeons Divided by a Common Language." *American Thoracic Surgery* 84 (2007): 363-4.
- BENFIELD, John R. and Christine B. FEAKE. "How Authors Can Cope with the Burden of English as an International Language." *Chest* 129 (2006): 1728-1730.
- BENFIELD, John R. and Kathryn. M. HOWARD. "The Language of Science." *European Journal of Cardiothoracic Surgery* 18 (2000): 642-648.
- CHARLES, Maggie. "Reconciling Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Graduate Writing: Using a Corpus to Teach Rhetorical Functions." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 6 (2007): 289-302.
- CHARLTON, Bruce G. "How Can the English-Language Scientific Literature Be Made More Accessible to Non-Native Speakers? Journals Should Allow Greater Use of Referenced Direct Quotations in 'Component-Oriented' Scientific Writing." *Medical Hypotheses* 69 (2007): 1163-1164.
- COOKE, Ray and Susan BIRCH-BECAAS. "Help on the Spot: Online Assistance for Writing Scientific English." *LSP and Professional Communication* 8.2 (2008): 96-112.
- EL MALIK, Abdullahi Tambul and Hilary NESI. "Publishing Research in a Second Language: The Case of Sudanese Contributors to International Medical Journals." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 7 (2008): 87-96.
- FLOWERDEW, John. *Academic Discourse*. Harlow Longman, 2002.
- "Scholarly Writers Who Use English as an Additional Language: What Can Goffman's "Stigma" Tell Us?" *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 7.2 (2008): 77-86.
- "Writing for Scholarly Publication in English: The Case of Hong Kong." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 8.2 (1999): 123-145.
- FLOWERDEW, Lynne. "Corpus-Based Analyses in EAP." *Academic Discourse*. Ed. J. Flowerdew J. Harlow: Longman, 2002. 95-114.
- *Corpus-Based Analyses of the Problem-Solution Pattern: A Phraseological Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008.
- GIANNONI, Davide Simone. "Medical Writing at the Periphery: The Case of Italian Journal Editorials." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 7 (2008): 97-107.
- HOPKINS Andy and Tony DUDLEY-EVANS. "A Genre-Based Investigation of the Discussion Sections in Articles and Dissertations." *English for Specific Purposes* 7 (1988): 113-121.
- HYLAND Ken. "Activity and Evaluation: Reporting Practices in Academic Writing". *Academic Discourse*. Ed. J. Flowerdew. Harlow: Longman, 2002. 115-130.
- *English for Academic Purposes: An Advanced Resource Book*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.
- LI, Yongyan and John FLOWERDEW. "Shaping Chinese Novice Scientists' Manuscripts for Publication." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16 (2007): 100-117.
- MAGNET, Anne and Didier CARNET. "Letters to the Editor: Still Vigorous after All These Years? A Presentation of the Discursive and Linguistic Features of the Genre." *English for Specific Purposes* 25.2 (2006): 173-199.



- OKAMURA, Akiko. "Two Types of Strategies Used by Japanese Scientists When Writing Research Articles in English." *System* 34 (2006): 68-79.
- ROWLEY-JOLIVET Elizabeth and Shirley CARTER-THOMAS. "When Practice Belies 'Theory': Form, Function and Frequency of If-Conditionals in Specialised Discourse." *ASP: La Revue du GERAS (Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches en Anglais de Spécialité)* 53-54 (2008): 39-61.
- SALAGER-MEYER Françoise. "Scientific Publishing in Developing Countries: Challenges for the Future." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 7 (2008): 121-132.
- SWALES John M. *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- SWALES, John M. and Christine B. FEAK. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994.
- *English in Today's Research World: A Writing Guide*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2000.
- TRIBBLE, Christopher. "Corpora and Corpus Analysis: New Windows on Academic Writing". *Academic Discourse*. Ed. J. Flowerdew. Harlow: Longman, 2002. 131-149.
- UZUNER, Sedef. "Multilingual Scholars' Participation in Core Global Academic Communities: a Literature Review." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 7 (2008): 250-263.
- VIBERT, Nicolas, Jean-François ROUET, Christine ROS, Mélanie RAMOND, and Bruno DESHOULLIERES. "The Use of Online Electronic Information Resources in Scientific Research: The Case of Neuroscience." *Library and Information Science Research* 29 (2007): 508-532.
- WEISSBERG, Robert and Suzanne BUKER. *Writing Up Research: Experimental Research Report Writing for Students of English*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Regents, 1990.



MISCELLANY



# TEACHING METHODS AND THEIR CONCEPTUALISATION FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

Raquel Criado  
Universidad de Murcia

## ABSTRACT

The concept of method has been substantially conditioned by the sources and principles on which the different methods have emerged throughout history. Accordingly, methods have been characterised by the virtues and deficiencies of such sources and principles. Due to easily understandable reasons, methods have not hitherto had access to the essential cognitive component in learning: the biological support on which it depends, that is to say, the brain, its structure, its functioning, and both the neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic elements and processes which trigger learning. It is argued that these factors should not only be studied and considered, but that they should be urgently integrated into the construct of method and its practical implications.

key words: Language teaching method, cognitive processes, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, repetitive practice.

## RESUMEN

El concepto de método ha estado condicionado sustancialmente por las fuentes y recursos sobre los cuales se han basado los métodos concretos que han ido surgiendo a lo largo de la historia. En tal sentido, los métodos se han caracterizado por los aspectos positivos y negativos, virtudes y carencias propias de dichas fuentes o recursos. Por razones fácilmente comprensibles, los métodos no han tenido acceso hasta ahora a un componente cognitivo esencial en el aprendizaje: el soporte biológico del cual depende, es decir, el cerebro, su estructura, su funcionamiento, los elementos y procesos neurolingüísticos y psicolingüísticos que en él propician el aprendizaje. En este artículo argüimos que dicho componente cognitivo no sólo debe ser estudiado y tenido en cuenta, sino que debe incorporarse con urgencia al constructo metodológico y a las implicaciones prácticas que este conlleva.

PALABRAS CLAVE: método para la enseñanza de lenguas, procesos cognitivos, psicolingüística, neurolingüística, conocimiento declarativo, conocimiento procedimental, prácticas repetitivas.



## I. INTRODUCTION

Language teaching methods have usually arisen within the school setting, which is a normal fact taking into account that this is the usual context where teaching has been (and still is) developed. The methods emerged in the school tradition have always been strongly conditioned by the prevalent linguistic theories at the time, both in their conception and in their nourishing sources.

In spite of this, it should be recognised that the study of other factors, together with those linguistically-rooted, has enriched teaching theory and practice. These are pedagogical factors, experience (as based on perceived and therefore “experienced” facts), or certain psychological factors of a behavioural nature, such as the case of the Audiolingual Method, which constitutes a clear example of the transference of the results from empirical studies on animal learning into human learning.

To a greater or lesser degree, all the preceding factors have undoubtedly constituted the underpinnings in the construct of method. Indeed, none of these disciplines should be excluded. Nevertheless, psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic parameters have hardly been considered in the theoretical and practical foundations of any method. What we precisely argue in this article is that the absence of psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics in the configuration and discussions of language teaching methods is critically flawed.

## II. A PSYCHOLINGUISTIC AND NEUROLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

As Doughty recently states, “Whereas pedagogically oriented discussions of issues abound [...] psycholinguistically motivated rationales for pedagogical recommendations are still rare” (206). The same can be stated regarding neurolinguistic factors: applied linguistics in general and foreign language teaching in particular have not taken into account neurological fundamentals. We believe that if language learning is a type of knowledge, knowing the psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic mechanisms and processes that occur in our mind when learning will be a useful basis, not only to teach foreign languages more effectively, but to conceptualise a method of action as well.

### II.1. THE NEUROLOGICAL NETWORK, THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT OF KNOWLEDGE

Since the 19th century, when Broca discovered the dependency relationship between the ability to talk and the part of the brain known as “Broca’s area,” cerebral research has made great advances (Harris). Such advancement has been fostered by new technologies and the increment in the number of researchers in this area.

It seems to be beyond any doubt that the centre of our cognitive system is rooted in our brain, which is composed of more than one thousand million neu-





rons, each of which has more than one hundred connections. This results in a potentially astronomical number of possible combinations of such connections.

We also know how neurons communicate between each other: by means of neurotransmitters. All these are activated through electrical impulses of a variable intensity originated by chemical elements produced in the cell body of each neuron. The neural network is a highly specialized organ responsible for administering all the human functions and activities (a kind of “central computer” on which all the information converges, is then organised and issues suitable commands to be executed by the corresponding part of our body). Besides, certain brain areas are specialised in functions (such as that in charge of language ability, for instance).

## II.2. DECLARATIVE AND PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE

The distinction between these two types of knowledge is largely accepted by the scientific community. Also, the neural structure and functioning seem to provide physical support for this distinction (Ullman, “Contributions”). Declarative knowledge (henceforth *DEC*) refers to “the what,” that is, facts and events (Squire; Roediger et al.). It is the type of knowledge that mostly distinguishes human beings from the rest of animals, since it allows us to reflect and make statements or value judgements. In reality, *DEC* can be transferred to our working memory once or many times, which implies that it is explicit, reflective and fully conscious knowledge. It could be stated that *DEC* is the closest type of knowledge advocated by rationalism, given that it involves a high level of the deductive component.

In linguistic terms, *DEC* is the explicit knowledge that we have about language and its functioning. Therefore, it refers to the whole of grammar, i.e. the knowledge of the underlying structural system which allows us to produce, process and send messages to our listener, or to receive them from our speaker so as to process and decode them to facilitate their understanding. An example of *DEC* applied to foreign language learning is the knowledge of the rule that adjectives in English do not agree either in gender or number with the noun they modify or qualify, as in ‘young boys’ (and not \*‘youngs boys’, for example, which is a common initial mistake for Spaniards).

As opposed to declarative knowledge, there exists another type of knowledge: procedural knowledge (*PRO*). This is “automatised” knowledge, which does not require explicit and conscious reflection on the processes and sequences of actions implied. If *DEC* refers to “the what,” *PRO* corresponds to “the how.” *PRO* makes it possible for us to learn to walk by walking, because we are already born with the necessary elements to walk. These are autonomously activated without the intervention of explicit reflection. As to language as a skill, human beings learn by means of our innate potentiality to construct the communicative instrument that has been already acquired by our fellow men, with whom we interact. In many aspects, the skill of language communication resembles other skills, such as walking, driving a car, making certain movements to reach an object, etc. *PRO* allows us



to produce readily available forms. Returning to our previous linguistic example, procedural knowledge would imply the automatic and error-free production of adjectives which do not agree in gender or number with the nouns they modify or qualify.

According to neurology and neurolinguistic specialists (see for example Ullman, “Contributions”) our brain has two differentiated systems -even if not completely independent- for *DEC* and *PRO*. These two types of knowledge differ in the manner in which they are acquired and stored:

- a) *DEC* is not encapsulated. *PRO* is fully encapsulated, i.e., it is not readily available to our memory or mind -or not available at all- and consequently it is not usually consciously analysed or processed.
- b) *DEC* is relatively slow in processing due to the conscious attention implied while transmitting it to working memory. On the contrary, *PRO* is quick in performance; it may be transferred to working memory, but it frequently remains in the implicit, not conscious memory system.
- c) *DEC* is usually rapid to acquire. The acquisition of *PRO*, however, is gradual and slow; it requires multiple or constant repetition of presentations, stimuli or responses. This involves an essential connection with the way that data are transferred from working memory to long-term memory and are thus finally consolidated. In turn, this holds a very important pedagogical implication, as shall be seen in subsection II.5.

Both *DEC* and *PRO* are important for overall language mastery, in the sense that linguistic knowledge consists of both types of knowledge, each of which has a different role. The learner needs a solid declarative base to which to refer to regarding activities that require a conscious, elaborate and not immediate delivery of production, such as certain writing tasks; on the other hand, the learner needs to have readily available forms so that their attention can be liberated from short-term memory and thus be applied to higher-level skills instead of the manipulation of forms (Bialystock; Johnson, “Teaching,” *Language*). As a result, communication will not be slow but sufficiently agile. Despite this, as Johnson (“Teaching,” *Language*) also cautions, learning should not depend on *PRO* alone, since the direct automatization of forms without a previous declarative base could risk fossilisation of the wrong forms.

Nevertheless, although neither *DEC* nor *PRO* should be absent in the learning process, it should not be forgotten that the finality in language learning is the automatization of what has been learnt. This means that the ultimate objective is the attainment of *PRO*.

### II.3. SEQUENCE OF *DEC* AND *PRO* IN KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

A key question in skill learning and thus in language learning is how to reach full proceduralisation, i.e. automatization. As explained above, taking into

account that both *DEC* and *PRO* are necessary for complete and balanced language mastery, the two following premises can be stated: (i) the presence of *DEC* or the recourse to this type of knowledge is a necessary condition for the achievement of *PRO* (according to Anderson 1982), and (ii) in any event, *DEC* contributes to the attainment of *PRO* insofar as conscious and reflective knowledge opens the way to the initial practice required for the beginning of proceduralisation, which will add to the automatising of the different linguistic skills more effectively. This facilitative role of *DEC* for the attainment of *PRO* is closely linked to the crucial issue discussed in this section: what is the optimal sequence of *DEC* and *PRO* for knowledge acquisition?

Following Anderson's "Adaptive Control Theory" model of skill learning or ACT<sup>1</sup> (Anderson, "Acquisition," *Cognitive*; Criado; Criado and Sánchez) highlight that the learning of *DEC* and *PRO* is usually subject to an order or sequence, which is *DEC*">*PRO*. Anderson's model (1982, 2005) claims two principles in knowledge acquisition: (i) *DEC* precedes *PRO*; (ii) complete knowledge is attained when full proceduralisation of knowledge is reached. The first principle results in the sequence *DEC*">*PRO*. The second principle advocates a necessary 'transfer' from *DEC* to *PRO* so as to achieve efficiency in skill use. Empirical evidence as to the pattern *DEC*">*PRO* can be found in the following studies (DeKeyser, "Skill" 101; Logan, "Toward," "Shapes," "An Instance"; Anderson et al.).

Evidently, the consideration of *DEC*">*PRO* as the single *sequence* of mastery for skills in general and for L1 and L2 in particular emerges as too rigid. In relation to L1, *DEC* does not seem to exist in newborn babies in an explicit manner, which implies that *PRO* is their only available resource for survival—accordingly, basic skills such as eating and the like are completely proceduralised already, whilst other types of less essential skills (such as language) are gradually acquired in a later stage. Regarding L2, *DEC*">*PRO* applies to adult learning in formal contexts; immigrants who do not attend formal instruction are a prototypical example of only-*PRO*-acquirers (with the resulting risk of fossilisation as indicated in subsection II.2).

#### II.4. KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION AND TYPES OF MEMORY

There exists a great plethora of recent studies on neurolinguistics (Ullman, "Contributions"; Ahlsen) which support the dependency between diverse language uses or specific components of language and certain neural disorders, such as aphasia, agrammatism, etc. Undeniably, one of the most important aspects involved is memory.

---

<sup>1</sup> The latest version of this model is ACT-R (R for "rational") and is largely close to the previous one.



We will only make reference to two types of store which most directly have an effect on the mechanisms of retention and learning subject to be used in language teaching -and thus to be integrated in a determined method: short-term memory and long-term memory.

Atkinson and Shiffrin postulated the theory of short-term memory which has gained more acceptance and which has been more influential in cognitive psychology. The fundamental characteristic of this type of memory is its limited capacity to store data. We are not capable of retaining (sometimes not even of perceiving) all the details in a scene that appears before our eyes. Neither are we capable of retaining or detecting all the linguistic elements in a written paragraph, or even less in a page or a chapter, or a whole oral conversation maintained during several minutes. Typically, we only retain those elements to which our attention is drawn with more emphasis, or those elements on which we focus our own attention. The remaining data are lost, that is, they disappear from the neural network through which they are accessible to our knowledge system. According to Atkinson and Shiffrin (Anderson, *Cognitive* 176), the model of retention to which data presented to us seems to adjust corresponds to Figure 1:

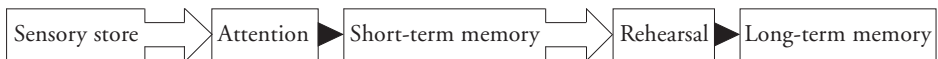


Figure 1.

From a biological perspective, the selective filter of short-term memory is extremely useful despite its limitations: it allows us to disregard much of the data accessible to us, which would overcharge our memory in great excess without involving any benefit given the total or nearly total lack of relevance of such data. On the other hand, the storing of all the data perceived by our senses would lead to such an accumulation that their processing and manipulation would become impossible to handle. Accordingly, the suitable complement of short-term memory is long-term memory; in other words, a type of memory capable of retaining only relevant, useful or necessary data -which are those needed for survival- during long periods of time.

## II.5. MEMORIZATION AND REPETITIVE PRACTICE

From a methodological point of view, it is especially interesting to highlight the mechanisms which allow the data selected in short-term memory to be consolidated in long-term memory. This type of memory is vital for the acquisition of language skills, since it is the basis of proceduralisation of knowledge -the ultimate objective of linguistic learning. Rundus and Anderson (*Cognitive* 241ff) showed one of the most relevant facts regarding the two types of memory in his experiments: repetition or repetitive practice is essential so that information in short-

term memory is transferred to long-term memory and is thus consolidated there. Accordingly, the more data are repeated, the more possibilities they will become consolidated. This also reveals the function of short-term memory: it is like an intermediate stage towards long-term memory. In other words, the factor of time is crucial in memorization: the longer data stay in short-term memory, the more possibilities for these data to access long-term memory.

Craik and Lockhart concluded that repetition is not so efficient from the perspective of the number of times with which it is performed but from the viewpoint of the intensity and attention paid during the repetitive process. This means that sheer repetition alone is not enough (it might even be irrelevant); but if repetition is accompanied by the attention of the person who repeats, there will be more possibilities of the information being stored. Owing to this, some authors favour the term “working memory” instead of short-term memory. In any event, the value of practice, both to retain data in working memory and in long-term memory, seems to be indisputable. As an example, Pirolli and Anderson (Anderson, *Cognitive* 188) have empirically shown that practice increases the capacity to retrieve data up to 50%.

### III. TRADITION AND COGNITIVE FACTORS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

During the last five hundred years, which is a well-documented period of time in relation to foreign language teaching, methods have had an unquestionable prominence in language classes (Kelly; Sánchez, *Historia, Los métodos*; Richards and Rodgers; Howatt). Due to their own nature, methods constitute a very important aid for teachers and students, since they offer an integrated, coherent and ordered guide or method of action. We should remember that every method poses advantages and disadvantages, that is to say, they are subject to unavoidable limitations. The disadvantages of a certain method augment if its definition or configuration does not correctly integrate all the necessary elements that should be present. By *method* (from the Greek “*meta-hodos*”: follow a way or route), we understand both the “the systematic and ordered way of doing something” and “the ensemble of techniques or activities that define such a way of acting” (Sánchez, “*Metodología*” 666). [My own translation from the Spanish original]. The emphasis lies on the procedural or formal aspects of action. But this perspective oversimplifies what is really involved in a method. Mackey stresses this fact when he affirms that methods “limit themselves to a single aspect of a complex subject, inferring that that aspect alone is all that matters” (156).

From the perspective of the reasons and motivations that underlie a method and the sources which nourish its principles, it must be stated that if such reasons and motivations are slanted or incomplete, the resulting methodological construct would also be slanted and incomplete. As stated above, the absence of psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic factors in the configuration of methods constitutes an undesirable omission. In what follows we will analyse how the cognitive principles and



processes previously described in section II have either been included or omitted in major foreign language teaching methods.

### III.1. THE GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD

The method that has taken deepest roots in the traditional school system since the latter was worldwide established is the so-called “traditional method,” or more rightly named as Grammar-Translation Method. This method relies on a linguistic theory which basically considers language as an ensemble of rules which leads to the generation of sentences from an undetermined number of words. Consequently, in the first place, students have to learn the rules and they secondly apply them to the lexicon in order to create sentences by means of direct and inverse translation practice (mainly in the written modality).

In more current terms, the Grammar-Translation Method prioritises the learning of *DEC*, that is, explicit, conscious and accessible-to-reflection knowledge about the language. Only after understanding what has to be learnt, the student will proceed to the proceduralisation stage or the consolidation of learning through practice. The latter is mainly focused on rule memorization rather than on the proceduralisation of the communicative use of language. It is taken for granted that the person who understands a rule will then be able to build the useful sentences for communicative interaction. Thus the first stage or the understanding of the object of learning is emphasised most, given that *DEC* is the ultimate objective and *PRO* is only used to reinforce *DEC*.

### III.2. THE DIRECT METHOD

Contrary to the type of practice involved in the Grammar-Translation Method, another method arose at the end of the 19th century, the Direct Method, which advocates *oral practice*. This is radically different from the principles of the Grammar-Translation Method. The Direct Method is tightly linked to natural learning, and is founded on the pedagogy that derives from the observation of the environment without major theoretical implications. However, it clearly assumes -even if not explicitly- that linguistic knowledge is acquired by way of practice (*PRO*) and rejects the reflection upon language (*DEC*), which is branded as harmful for learning. The Direct Method is centred on proceduralisation through language use in situational contexts which entail a certain level of relevant communication. In other words, the emphasis is not placed on forms isolated from the context in which they are used.

### III.3. THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD

In one of his most important works, Lado offers a clear description of the “new” methodological approach that was to become firmly established during the



1960s: the Audiolingual Method. The most outstanding feature of this new method is that it is supposedly based on “scientific criteria.” The importance of this starting point needs to be highlighted. The methods applied until the end of the 20th century were supported by speculations and assumptions as well as principles which are totally different from those which govern experimental sciences. Hence the change of perspective was considered “revolutionary.”

The scientific criteria on which this new method rests come from experimental psychology, specifically from Skinner’s application to linguistic learning from his research on animal learning (more precisely, the experiments performed on laboratory rats. The approach is not incorrect. Indeed, the mechanism of repetition as a basis for learning is not only corroborated by current studies, but it is also confirmed as the basic mechanism for the proceduralisation of knowledge in our brain, as was explained in subsection II.5.

A careful analysis of the Audiolingual Method reveals that the problems that tend to be attributed to this method do not lie in repetitive practice or *drills* as a learning strategy so much. The crucial issue is that such repetitive practice or drills are not contextualised and are finally—and almost exclusively—focused on forms and structures, thus ignoring content or meaning. The result is that practice becomes mechanical and thus critically deviates from what is language: an instrument of communication where both form and meaning are inseparable so as to attain the communicative objectives inherent to language use. The following drill reveals a non-contextualized exchange which is consequently hardly significant for real communicative purposes:

*Book.* The book is on the table.

*Sparrow.* The sparrow is on the roof.

*Elephant.* The elephant is on the lorry.

*Girl.* The girl is on the chair, etc.

Given that the semantic distance among the four utterances above is remarkably striking, the lack of contextualisation of each one of them -both in isolation and in relation with the remaining sentences- is clearly noticeable. If we compare this type of practice or drill with the habitual practice in the Grammar-Translation Method, the similarities are also evident. If the objective in the Audiolingual Method was the structure, in the Grammar-Translation Method it was the underlying rule. In both cases the meaning is subordinated to the form, which is prioritised. Observe this example from the Grammar-Translation Method:

Has this good girl my good mother’s ring? She has not your mother’s ring, she has her brother’s. Have you my cap or my neighbour’s? I have neither yours nor your neighbour’s, I have my father’s, etc.

(Brown, John G. *Gramática española-inglesa: sistema teórico-práctico. Por un nuevo método Modificación del Doctor Ollendorff*. Madrid. Librería de San Martín, 1858. Lesson VII).





The meaning reflected by the words is irrelevant from the point of view of the communication established, which is contextually null and void. It has to be borne in mind that the type of practice involved in each case above perfectly accounts for the objectives in each respective method: for the Grammar-Translation Method, being able to perform direct and inverse translation; for the Audiolingual Method, being able to communicate at an oral level by means of vocabulary and patterns representative of real life communication (Sánchez, *Los métodos*). In this sense, there is an excellent correspondence between ends and means.

### III.4. THE COMMUNICATIVE METHOD

It could be argued that this lack of context or ‘communicative’ nature so typical from the Grammar-Translation and the Audiolingual methods is what the Communicative Method, originated during the 1970s, tries to cater for. With its many variants and nuances, it stresses, at least from the perspective of the theory which inspired it, the functionality of language: language is used as an instrument of communication (Halliday; Van Ek; Canale and Swain; Littlewood; Savignon; Sánchez, *La enseñanza*). Therefore, message is given priority over the forms through which it is conveyed. Truly, the Communicative Method has been qualified by many of its followers, and the importance of focus on form in language has also been claimed in certain variants of the Communicative Method such as the Task-Based Language Teaching Approach (Long and Robinson; Skehan, *Cognitive*, “Task-based”). In spite of this, the emphasis on content predominates and there are many cases in which forms are explicitly neglected.

The sources and principles which underpin the Communicative Method are essentially linguistic, although it should be acknowledged that the language approach is more complete and realistic than in previous methods. Other elements are appreciated, such as pedagogical and psychological factors, together with the intense debate and fruitful research on second language acquisition. This debate and the ensuing studies have been crucial to opening the way to two essential disciplines in the configuration of the new methodological paradigm advocated in this work: psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics.

The principles on which the Communicative Method relies have given rise to practice activities with certain specific characteristics which are also related to the departing theoretical tenets of this method. The emphasis on the content transmitted by means of linguistic forms is one of the most noteworthy characteristics of such practice. Accordingly, the message should be comprehensible; also, open-ended activities with almost no precise objectives are favoured on the grounds that the sheer linguistic use will lead towards the consolidation of language in communicative use (even if what is intended to be consolidated is not well defined). In summary, open-ended or free activities prevail over controlled exercises. Grammar activities are not totally excluded, but they are either cautioned against or they are neglected at the cost of tasks which are only guided by the targeted communicative objectives (“being able to write a holiday report,” for example).





As can be seen, then, the Communicative Method is not basically free from the conceptual limitations which have characterised the preceding methodological formulations. From a cognitive perspective, this means that *DEC* is also neglected in the Communicative Method in favour of *PRO*, which results from practice as understood in a global sense and somewhat undefined (“language practice as communication”).

In the activities, meaning is transmitted by a few structural patterns, in such a way that a certain balance is achieved in the importance granted to both form and meaning, as can be seen in this model:

Talk about the picture. Examples:  
*There's some water in the big field.*  
*There are some pigs in the small field.*  
*There are some sheep on the mountain.*

(Swan, Michael and Catherine Walter. *Cambridge English 1: Student's Book*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984. Unit 7C).

There also abound more open-ended activities, such as the following one:  
Write three things that you were going to do and three things you were supposed to do in the last four weeks. Think about why you didn't do these things.  
*Visit my aunt*

(Redston, Chris and Gillie Cunningham. *Face 2 Face Intermediate: Student's Book*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Unit 10A).

### III.5. FINAL REMARKS

It is necessary to acknowledge the close link between the theories and the foundations from which each method departs, the resulting methodological formulation and the suitable matching between the objectives and the strategies and activities implemented to attain such goals. Despite this, the change to a new method, a frequent practice throughout history, has not allowed us to eliminate certain advantages and problems almost inherent to the method in question; what is more, changes show that the preceding methods were not as efficient as expected. The related explanation of these two points can be perfectly framed within a cognitive perspective as has been done in the whole of section III: the theoretical principles of methods do not comply with the prevalent *DEC* > *PRO* cognitive sequence of second language learning by adults. This is revealed by the large stress on *DEC* in the Grammar-Translation Method, the emphasis on *PRO* and the strong rejection to *DEC* in the Direct and Audiolingual Methods; or the bias towards *PRO* in the Communicative Method (particularly in the Task-Based Language Teaching Approach, or in Process-based Approaches). Besides, practice should avoid mechanical repetition without any form-meaning connections because the absence of such a link may hinder proceduralisation (DeKeyser, “Beyond”).



#### IV. CONCLUSION: NEW PSYCHOLINGUISTIC AND NEUROLINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEFINITION OF A LANGUAGE TEACHING METHOD

From the previously outlined studies on psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics, there emerge several insights which fully influence the configuration of a method for language teaching in order to avoid the deficiencies described in the major language teaching methods above. The most significant insights can be summarised in the following points:

1. Two different types of knowledge are to be differentiated: *DEC*, as related to linguistic reflection—how the system works—and *PRO*, which refers to consolidated, i.e. utterly proceduralised and automatised linguistic knowledge. It should be remarked that both types of knowledge are relevant for language learning insofar as *DEC* leads to *PRO*, which is the decisive objective for linguistic proficiency, and as *DEC* usually precedes *PRO* and conditions the acquisition of the latter (following Anderson, “Acquisition,” *Cognitive*).
2. Both *DEC* and *PRO* are two complementary types of knowledge or subject to be complementary. There is no reason why we should do without one or another in learning.
3. The key element in the process of knowledge acquisition is data retention or memorisation. This is a necessary condition in the acquisition and mastery of any type of knowledge, including language. For this purpose, our brain utilises a strategy which has always been present in the history of education, although with varying degrees of success: repetitive practice. The neural activity which leads to data retention is consolidated through the same repetitive processes, which has been sufficiently endorsed by experimental research.
4. The data to which we have access are stored in long-term memory. Short-term memory or working memory is a prior stage to more lasting consolidation. Together with repetitive practice, another factor has an effect on the transfer of data to long term memory: the intensity of practice and the attention paid to selected information. This means that not all repetitive practice is valid despite being very frequent. Repetitive practice without attention can be inefficient, whilst less-durable repetitive practice may be effective as long as it is performed with the appropriate conditions of attention and intensity. Hence the conclusion that the nature of practice is crucial and influences its efficiency.
5. The nature of practice in foreign language teaching can be viewed under two different angles, in relation to a) how linguistic practice should be and b) the type of attention applicable to practice with linguistic elements. Regarding a), it must be remembered that language use needs to be communicative, that is, both form and meaning ought to be contemplated. As to b), the



attention and intensity of practice can be developed via the resort to reflection on language. This reflection should be limited to the specific linguistic points involved in each practice activity. Both the practice activity itself and the pertinent linguistic reflection must be suitably balanced in such a way that repetition is primed and reflection is adjusted to the very essential needs in each activity; accordingly, repetition will be finally effective.

Therefore, a realistic methodological formulation faithful to the human learning systems cannot and should not ignore psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic perspectives. Without any doubt, the incipient studies and research on these two fields will refine the methodological contributions in the near future, but the already available results point towards the consideration of a more realistic description of the elements to be taken into account when fixing and defining a methodological option.

## WORKS CITED

- AHLSSEN, Elisabeth. *Introduction to Neurolinguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006.
- ANDERSON, John R. "Acquisition of Cognitive Skill." *Psychological Review* 89 (1982): 369-406.
- *Cognitive Psychology and Its Implications*. New York: Worth, 2005.
- "Skill Acquisition: Compilation of Weak-method Problem Solutions." *Psychological Review* 94.2 (1987): 192-210.
- ANDERSON, John R., J.M. FINCHANI and S. DOUGLASS. "The Role of Examples and Rules in the Acquisition of a Cognitive Skill." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition* 23 (1997): 932-945.
- ATKINSON, R. C. and Richard M. SHIFFRIN. "Human Memory: A Proposed System and Its Control Processes." *The Psychology and Learning of Motivation: Advances in Research and Theory*. Vol. 2. Ed. K.W. Spence and J.T. Spence. New York: Academic Press, 1968. 89-195.
- BIALYSTOK, Ellen. "On the Relationship Between Knowing and Using Forms." *Applied Linguistics* 3.3 (1982): 181-206.
- CANALE, Michael and Merrill SWAIN. "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing." *Applied Linguistics* 1.1 (1980): 1-47.
- CRAIK, Fergus I.M. and Robert S. LOCKHART. "Levels of Processing: A Framework for Memory Research." *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour* 11 (1972): 671-684.
- CRiado, Raquel. "Patterns of Activity Sequencing in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language and Their Effects on Learning: A Quasi-Experimental Study." Diss. Universidad de Murcia, 2008. <[http://www.resisenred.net/TDR-1021108-094744/index\\_cs.html](http://www.resisenred.net/TDR-1021108-094744/index_cs.html)>.
- CRiado, Raquel and Aquilino SÁNCHEZ. "Cognitive Patterns in the Acquisition of Knowledge and the Sequencing of Activities in the Organization of Teaching Materials." *Proceedings of the 32nd AEDEAN International Conference*. [Forthcoming].
- DEKEYSER, Robert. "Beyond Focus on Form: Cognitive Perspectives on Learning and Practicing Second Language Grammar." *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. Ed. C. Doughty and J. Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. 42-63.





- “Skill Acquisition Theory.” *Theories in Second Language Acquisition: An Introduction*. Ed. B. Van Patten and J. Williams. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2007. 97-113.
- DOUGHTY, Catherine. “Cognitive Underpinnings of Focus on Form.” *Cognition and Second Language Instruction*. Ed. P. Robinson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 207-257.
- HALLIDAY, Michael Alexander Kirkwood. *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold, 1973.
- HARRIS, L.J. “Cerebral Control for Speech in Right-handers and Left-handers: An Analysis of the Views of Paul Broca, His Contemporaries, and His Successors.” *Brain and Language* 40.1 (1991): 1-50.
- HOWATT, A.P.R. with H.G. WIDDOWSON. *A History of English Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.
- JOHNSON, Keith. *Language Teaching and Skill Learning*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- “Teaching Declarative and Procedural Knowledge.” *Grammar and the Language Teacher*. Ed. M. Bygate, A. Tonkin and E. Williams. London: Prentice Hall, 1994. 121-131.
- KELLY, Louis G. *25 Centuries of Language Teaching*. New York: Newbury House, 1969.
- LADO, Robert. *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1964.
- LITTLEWOOD, William. *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.
- LOGAN, G. “An Instance Theory of Attention and Memory.” *Psychological Review* 109 (2002): 376-400.
- “Shapes of Reaction-time Distributions and Shapes of Learning Curves: A Test of the Instance Theory of Automaticity.” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition* 18 (1992): 883-914.
- “Toward an Instance Theory of Automatization.” *Psychological Review* 95 (1988): 492-527.
- LONG, Michael H. and Peter ROBINSON. “Focus on Form: Theory, Research and Practice.” *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. Ed. C. Doughty and J. Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. 15-41.
- MACKEY, W.F. *Language Teaching Analysis*. London: Longman, 1965.
- PIROLI, Peter L. and John R. ANDERSON. “The Role of Practice in Fact Retrieval.” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition* 11 (1985): 136-153.
- RICHARDS, Jack C. and Theodore S. RODGERS. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- ROEDIGER, H.L., M.S. WELDON and B.H. CHALLIS. “Explaining Associations Between Implicit and Explicit Measures of Retention: A Processing Account.” *Varieties of Memory and Consciousness: Essays in Honour of Endel Tulving*. Ed. H.L. Roediger and Fergus I.M. Craik. Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1989. 3-41.
- RUNDUS, D.J. “Analysis of Rehearsal Processes in Free Recall.” *Experimental Psychology* 88 (1971): 63-77.
- SÁNCHEZ, Aquilino. *La enseñanza de idiomas en los últimos cien años: métodos y enfoques*. Madrid: SGEL, 2009.
- *Historia de la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera*. Madrid: SGEL, 1992.

- “Metodología: conceptos y fundamentos.” *Vademécum para la formación de profesores: enseñar español como segunda lengua (L2) lengua extranjera (LE)*. Ed. I. Santos and J. Sánchez. Madrid: SGEL, 2004. 665-689.
- *Los métodos en la enseñanza de idiomas: evolución histórica y análisis didáctico*. Madrid: SGEL, 1997.
- SAVIGNON, Sandra J. *Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice. Texts and Contexts in Second Language Learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.
- SKEHAN, Peter. *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.
- “Task-based Instruction.” *Language Teaching* 36 (2003): 1-14.
- SKINNER, B.F. *Verbal Behaviour*. New York: Apple-Century-Crofts, 1957.
- SQUIRE, L.R. *Memory and Brain*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- ULLMAN, Michael T. “A Cognitive Neuroscience Perspective on Second Language Acquisition: The Declarative/Procedural Model.” *Mind and Context in Adult Second Language Acquisition: Methods, Theory and Practice*. Ed. C. Sanz. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown UP, 2005. 141-178.
- “Contributions of Memory Circuits to Language: The Declarative/Procedural Model.” *Cognition* 92 (2004): 231-270.
- VAN EK, J.A. *The Threshold Level*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1975.
- VAN PATTEN, Bill and Jessica Williams, eds. *Theories in Second Language Acquisition*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.





## REVIEW

ROMANTICISM REGAINED. Viorica Patea and Paul Scott Derrick, eds. *Modernism Revisited: Transgressing Boundaries and Strategies of Renewal in American Poetry*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. 243 pages.

Revisiting may mean the holding on to a memory one should start to let go of, and nobody has made better escape artists than the Modernists themselves. "Revisiting Modernism" may thus ring an ironic note, but there are good reasons for playing it; and that may simply be that we have not gotten much farther, that there is no 'post-' in Modernism. We may never have left Modernism behind after all and like good would-be-modernist we are inclined "to generate a journey that becomes a mythic narrative of the self and the language of the Poet" (188). These are Manuel Brito's words in his excellent overarching treatment of Modernist American poetry: "Instances of the Journey Motif Through Language and Self in Some Modernist American Poets." But he may as well be referring to our own reception of Modernist poetry in the 21st-century as part of this as yet ongoing journey. Even if Paul Scott Derrick asserts in the Introduction that this book is not attempting to answer the questions "what is Modernism? When and how did it begin? And has it really ended?" (5), the truth is that this collection of essays testifies for a kind of answer, namely that Modernism has not really ended and that the answer to its meaning lies in our midst. The pertinence of *Modernism Revisited* is that, unlike *Brideshead Revisited*, it is not looking back as a way to reconcile us with what cannot be helped but to make present what is still with us as a kind of celebration. Thus, Derrick adds:

"Modernism revisited: this is not another exercise in disingenuous critical positioning" (4), but rather a solid choreography of multiple critical voices which profitably speak to each other due mainly to the effective editing of this book by Viorica Patea and Paul Scott Derrick.

It is important to note that the volume under review is not just about Modernism but, namely, American poetry. Most of the essays in this collection are devoted to single authors representative of the high canon of 20th-century American poetry arranged within two main sections that echo the books subtitle: "Transgressing Boundaries" and "Strategies of Renewal." The first is really about Modernist American poets proper, while the second focuses more on how later American poets have responded to their Modernist inheritance. But the greatest contribution of *Modernism Revisited* lies on its presumption that there is something unique about American Modernist poetry which, unlike the Modernist Classicism of, say, the English T.E. Hulme, is unashamedly Romantic in line with its own cultural heritage—that of Emerson and Whitman. Of course T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound are major anomalies due to their long-term European residence, not to mention the former's British citizenship. And one is tempted to pose the question that Pound put to Harriet Monroe: "Are you for American poetry or for poetry?" (Bradbury and Ruland 278). The editor of *Poetry's* sin had been the setting of an epigraph from Whitman on the first edition of the magazine. The history of American poetry in the 20th-century may be the tale of its exclusion from the High Modernism of those who chose to leave for Europe. Yet, is Modernism a historical period now gone, a place one had to





attend in person? Or is it, rather, a state of mind, between memory and desire? Perhaps a bit of both in the words of the Imagists themselves: “We believe that ‘Imagisme’ comes from a city which all good Americans are supposed to visit late or soon” (Jonas 13). Those poets that stayed home may have simply replied that the city Pound refers to was in American, though more like a country town than an urban monster.

William Carlos Williams is an interesting case. He did appear in Pound’s *Des Imagistes* (1914), yet soon opted out of the project to “create somehow by an intense, individual effort, a new —an American— poetic language” (Jonas 171). Hélène Aji could have made more of it in her “Pound and Williams: The Letters as Modernist Manifesto”; but, as it is, she does offer a very interesting case study of Modernist transatlantic tensions through a close and enlightening close reading of the letters these two poets exchanged. However Aji’s interests lie elsewhere, more on the friendship between the two poets and in constructing their correspondence as a *proto*-Modernist Manifesto. Furthermore, “what started as a manifesto in the making has turned into an ideology” (60); an ideology that uses poetics as a means for political liberation. Aji unites their efforts, despite the poets’ differences, in “the formal liberation of poetry from the constraints of fixed meter to a desire to free America from the cultural imperialism of Europe” (66). Yet, questions about the ideology of Modernism should not be taken lightly, and a quick glance at Georg Lukacs or Fredric Jameson would not have gone amiss if only to throw some light over what may be inversely understood as the tyranny of Modernism’s ideological formalism. That Pound and Williams presented a common ideological front is going a little too far if only in hindsight of the impact of European Fascism on Pound as opposed to Williams increasing commitment to “American” poetry. But the strength of this article lies in the way it teases out the epistolary aesthetics that erupt from the friendship of these two poets as the letters brushed pass each other mid-Atlantic as it were.

William Carlos Williams’s second thoughts towards European Modernism is nicely complemented by Ernesto Suárez-Toste who notes the

poet’s “ambivalent coupling of enthusiasm and boredom with the Surrealist project” (163). In his “Spontaneous, not Automatic: William Carlos Williams versus Surrealist Poetics,” Suárez-Toste explores Williams resistance to Surrealism, which along with Symbolism, he saw as the Old World’s ties to tradition. There is influence in the resistance, Suárez-Toste argues, and naturally so. And the subtext is that Williams’s American poetry belongs to the true Modernist line —the Imagist to which Suárez-Toste unproblematically tags Objectivism (170). This is probably wanting to say more than is necessary; the opposite, in fact, of what Suárez-Toste really wants to say. But the point carries that Surrealism is no Modernism, even if Symbolism is presented as somewhat a mediator between the two, but which begs the important question: what is Modernism without the avant-garde? But if there is a Modernist theme Suárez-Toste felicitously stumbles upon is that of resistance and influence; a covert classicist anxiety which no Romanticist make-over can ultimately hide.

Bart Eeckhout’s “Wallace Stevens’ Poetry of Resistance” is all about a close reading of the poet’s own version of the Modernist tell-tale struggle between form and content: “Poetry must resist the intelligence almost successfully.” The thing about close readings, and that is the fragility of this critical tool, is how the resulting in-reading can happily turn into a misreading. But Eeckhout does make the most of it, carving a magisterial line along the semantics of “intelligence.” Not an easy term to define, it becomes in turn, “intelligibility” (125) or “reason” (129ff.), as opposed to “intuition” and “emotion.” The adverb “almost” becomes, in turn, the focus of a fruitful debate over the true meaning of resistance; not as transgression, but as a strategy that injects “his poetry with and insatiable desire” (131). The subtext is that there is no misreading Stevens, if only one is guided by an ‘almost’ resistance. And that is a beautiful thought. But one cannot help feeling that his final philosophical flourish with reference to Steven’s inherent American Pragmatism is not a greater concession to “intelligence” in detriment of “desire” than Eeckhout intended. But that does not upset his argument for, as T.S. Eliot once con-



sidered. Pragmatism is an emotional philosophy. As President of Harvard's Philosophical Club in 1913, Eliot asserted that "[William] James' philosophical writings constitute an emotional attitude more than a book of dogma" ("Relationship"). But we all know how Eliot felt about emotions and he is not expressing a kind thought towards Pragmatism.

Barry Ahearn's "Frost's Sonnets: In and Out of Bounds" follows nicely on from Eeckhout, though his take on 'form' is slightly different. The difference is that Ahearn is intent on redeeming constraint by virtue of "its inseparability from form" (36). Or is it the other way round? Perhaps more the latter as Ahearn adds, "Frost adopts the sonnet to help defend himself against or inhibit an illusory freedom, and suggests that what many people call 'freedom' is simply a relaxation or abolition of salutary restraints" (40). What Ahearn means is that poetic form, here the sonnet, can distill the "salutary" from the "restraint." Here, Stevens's "almost" becomes Frost's "something," which by virtue of not being "anything" in particular restrains but without being an imposition. Ambiguous? May be. And if we are still wondering which *form* would this "intelligence" take one need only capitalize the first letter. Plato's theory of forms does come to the rescue in what is the vanguard to the Romantic troops that follow: Kant and Coleridge (47). But Ahearn has the good sense to resist such simplification, just as he shows Frost himself resisting the Romantic temptation, though it might have been useful to refer to the European Romantic tradition's own struggle with the Classical forms in, say, William Wordsworth's own sonnets. In Frost's hands, Ahearn argues, the sonnet is the distillation of Nature Poetry into the Poetry of Human Nature.

Frost's sonnets find a useful mirror in Japanese haiku of which Gudrun M. Grabher is a self-confessed pseudo-practitioner. The story starts with her visit to Japan on a two-month scholarship to study the shortest of poetics forms. There is, however, a certain defeatism in her admission that she only brought back from Japan "the frustrated insight that some things are, indeed, incomprehensible, utterly and ultimately impenetrable" (136), which stands uneasily with

her praise: "[The haiku] photographically paints a picture" (140). And here Grabher invokes Eliot's objective correlative to establish the cross-reference between the haiku and Modernist poetry. It is a tricky exercise in comparative literature which, however enlightening, is not here drawn with the conviction that convinces. There is not only ambivalence and contradiction between the haiku's impenetrability and, then, about its photographic quality, about the absolute differences between the Western and Eastern mind, but bringing intuition into the equation is problematic in the light of the objective correlative itself. Grabher may have done better sticking to Pound, who explicitly endorsed Oriental poetics, rather than Eliot's critical statements whose complexity do exceed the limitation of name-dropping. Grabher does, indeed, do better to invoke Imagism's determination to write a "poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed" (141). All the same, the haiku becomes the source of an ambitious reflection upon the linguistic mediation of reality as the measuring-pole for good close readings of key Modernist poems—predictably Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," but also an excellent reading of e.e. cummings's "loneliness/a leaf falls." The only danger is that of elevating the haiku to a poetic universality which cannot afford to ignore the cultural specificity that gives rise to it, and whose impenetrability to the Western mind was the very point of Grabher's Japanese experience. Instead, Zhao-ming Qian's "Pao-hsien Fang and the Naxi Rites in Ezra Pound's *Cantos*" is less ambitious but very effective in presenting the reader with very enlightening unpublished material about Pound's later life and his interest in Chinese culture.

The persistence in this volume of the least American of all Modernist American Poets, T.S. Eliot, must need trouble us all. But the beauty of Charles Altieri is the deliberateness with which he takes it on in his "Modern Realism and Lowell's Confessional Style," in what is a rethinking of that touchstone Modernist cry "Impersonality," which must compete on even terms with Pound's "Make it new." Altieri contends that Modernist "new realism," such as the stress on impersonal objectivity, made the poet choose formalism as against political commitment—be-





cause it could not theoretically be divorced from the distortions of “rhetoric and rhetorical self-congratulation that were also fundamental aspects of its heritage” (209). Altieri’s theoretical framework combines Lacan and Hegel, in that the former “creates an intimate social psychology out of Hegelian themes” (211), in an effort to overcome the incompatibility between private (formal) sincerity and public (political) concerns. Formal impersonality is all very good where the perception of the world as object is concerned, though not so good where animated beings and interpersonal empathy is required. Inversely the political turn of poetry, which may be compensating for the limitations of formalism, for its part easily falls prey to the insincerity of over-imaginative empathy. For Altieri, the Confessional Poetry of second generation Modernists stands as the test case of a possible reconciliation between these two poles; a formal realism that is not in tension with the imaginary. What Altieri is getting at is a theory of impersonality that may incorporate the imaginary, and he thinks Robert Lowell fulfils that possibility. This poet relocates “new realism” within a confessional style “that does not so much create grounds for dismissing the impersonal as it elicits ways of reading those activities as continuous with more overt modes of problematic but inescapable personal investment” (n6, 217). The argument is fascinating and it lends itself to a most profitable reading of Modernist reinventions, but which may not be that inventive after all if one considers Eliot’s impersonal theory of art as already an strategy to distil, not override personality, for “only those that have personality and emotions know what it is means to want to escape those things” (*Sacred* 58). And one would have liked to see Altieri take his argument farther and defend a confessional reading of T.S. Eliot’s poetry. That would really have been revisiting Modernism with a vengeance.

The European strain, that is, Eliot’s literal and phantasmagorical presence in this volume, threatens to contaminate American Modernist poetry beyond nativist recognition—if that was ever the aim of this volume. And Viorica Patea’s contribution ‘T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and the Poetics of the Mythical Method’ brings the point home, though not exactly to America. Her

point is precisely that Eliot seeks locus not in geographical space but in the spiritual localism of anthropological primitivism. This is not a place but a state of (the Western) mind. This is not romantic melancholia for a past revisited but a call for a present regained and which Patea insightfully frames within the Impersonal Theory of Art reinterpreted as a form of radical personality seeking out the universal underlining of the instincts. Patea’s Jungian reconfiguration of psychology suitably supplements Altieri’s own reworking in Lowell’s confessional poetry; not so much away from personality but weary of impersonation. Instead, “psychology brought about the scientific re-discovery of ancients truths” (97). Patea’s ensuing close analysis of *The Waste Land* is an overwhelming exercise in erudition involving an all-encompassing knowledge of the more rare of Eliot’s journal contributions. It is an unusual presentation of Eliot, the academic, whose disparate—and lesser known—early writings on philosophy and anthropology are successfully brought to bear and combined with an acute sensitiveness for the poetry. Patea effectively argues for Eliot’s transcultural dialogue with the “other” (110) which defies more critical receptions of what has been perceived as his cultural elitism.

Saving first for last, Marjorie Perloff’s star opening contribution is the most obvious, yet most direct address to the volume’s theme: “The Aura of Modernism.” Her argument wants to bypass the sentimentality of recovery by suggesting that Modernism has been made out—Frank Kermode as prime suspect—to be more culturally elitists than it really was, rather, it was already “contaminated” as she puts it “by its rapprochement with the discourses of everyday life” (19). The argument is clinched once she establishes that literary modernism continues to be part of popular literary experience. There is nothing to revisit, there is “survival rather than revival” (14), and there is truth to the chime. If obscurity has traditionally been modernism’s cultural Achilles’ heels, then Amazon.com is here to slay the slanderer. And Perloff quotes at length from Amazon customer’s book reviews to prove the point of just how enthusiastic ‘non-academic’ readers still are about Modernism; how una-

shamed to knock and enter the now virtual door of the once—but not really—exclusive Modernist literary club. No cultural reification, Perloff assures us, but “sheer enthusiasm” (22). Yet, sentimentalism may have sneaked in after all, no offence to the bloggers, but rather for underestimating the impact of online marketing ready to sell anything in quantity, which cannot be an adequate rule of thumb for artistic success even if John Cage says so himself (29)—but I think he meant something else. And the truth comes out when, in a footnote added after completion of the article, Perloff reveals that Amazon customer reviews, by virtue of their anonymity, are often covert marketing ploys intent on promoting the sales of particular books. Well, there goes the ‘sheer enthusiasm’ of the ‘non-academic reader’. But Perloff, all the same, presents us with a very legitimate symptom of a crossroads reached in the question of high art and popular culture in the field of Modernist literature. It is true that Marxist criticism may have sung its swan song struggling against the current of a consumer society that is here, for the moment at least, to stay. But it still has important things to say, if only testified by some recent work that follows in the steps of Fredric Jameson’s *A Singular Modernity*. Seth Moglen’s *Mourning Modernity*, for example, is a forward looking Marxist critique bearing the torch for what he calls “new modernism studies” (8). Moglen’s suggests there are two literary modernisms: one canonical High Modernism that deals with loss through the acceptance and political inaction of melancholy, and the “other” Modernism—women, the proletariat, the minorities—that mourns as a way of refusing to accept loss by taking up political arms against a capitalist sea of troubles. In this light, Perloff’s argument about survival rather than revival shows her as uneasily balancing an all-embracing literary commercialism with the perpetuation of elite Modernist works come “bestsellers.” But one knows what Perloff means, yet one has to wonder whether it is worth “surviving” at any price—bargains are not always the cheaper.

The magic twist afforded by *Modernism Revisited* is that rather than make us question whether American poetry deserves its own Mod-

ernist brand, it actually makes us wonder how much European Modernism is not really American in the first place. And yet one would have liked to see the term Modernism pluralized; that, say, the Harlem Renaissance should have had a mention, if only to problematize the canonization of “American” Modernism in its own right. Other critical works—Walter Benn Michaels’s *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism*—have dealt with the interesting issue of identity and American Modernism, and this is not the concern of *Modernism Revisited*. In short, one would have wanted to hear some more about the “other” modernisms, not to mention women poets such as H.D and Marianne Moore to whom only Manuel Brito gives sustained attention. Perhaps the implication is that American Modernism is, however canonical its treatment, that “other” always within Modernism. The Romanticism no European Classicism, however “modern,” can ultimately suppress. In this the preset volume amply succeeds in what should be essential reading for all those interested in both American poetry and Modernism.

Fabio L. VERICAT

#### WORKS CITED

- BRADBURY, Malcolm and Richard Ruland. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. London: Penguin, 1992.
- ELIOT, T.S. “The Relationship Between Politics and Metaphysics” (bMS Am 1691 (25)). “T.S. Eliot’s Family Papers.” Houghton Library. Harvard University, 1913.
- . *The Sacred Wood*. New York: Methuen, 1986.
- JAMESON, Fredric. *A Singular Modernity*. New York: Verso, 2002.
- JONES, Peter, ed. *Imagist Poetry*. London: Penguin, 1972.
- MICHAELS, Walter Benn. *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995.
- MOGLEN, Seth. *Mourning Modernity: Literary Modernism and the Injuries of American Capitalism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2007.





## PEER REVIEWERS FOR *RCEI*: NOVEMBER 2009

Listed below are the referees who reviewed manuscripts for *RCEI* 59 (November 2009). We express our gratitude to their work and generosity.

Pedro Á. MARTÍN

Isabel K. LEÓN PÉREZ

Leslie BOBB-WOLFF

Manuel A. HERNÁNDEZ

Sally BURGESS

Ana DÍAZ GALÁN

María del Carmen FUMERO

Dulce RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ

Carmen TOLEDANO BUENDÍA

Aquilino SÁNCHEZ PÉREZ

María José GONZÁLEZ RODRÍGUEZ

Adelaida JURADO SPUCH

María A. MARTÍN DÍAZ

Received, Acceptance, and Publication Dates for articles in *RCEI* 59:

- *Christine Feak*. “Negotiating Publication: Author Responses to Peer Review of Medical Research Articles in Thoracic Surgery.” Received for Publication: March 12, 2009; Acceptance for Publication: September 8, 2009. Published: November 2009.
- *David C.S. Li*. “Learning English for Academic Purposes: Why Chinese EFL Learners Find EAP So Difficult to Master.” Received for Publication: March 12, 2009; Acceptance for Publication: September 8, 2009. Published: November 2009.
- *Nancy Lea Eik-Nes*. ““Dialoging”: A Social Interactive Practice in Academic Writing.” Received for Publication: April 22, 2009; Acceptance for Publication: July 14, 2009. Published: November 2009.
- *Jo Lewkowicz*. “Concluding Your Master’s Level Thesis.” Received for Publication: March 18, 2009; Acceptance for Publication: July 3, 2009. Published: November 2009.
- *Pedro Martín Martín* and *Isabel K. León Pérez*. “Promotional Strategies in Research Article Introductions: An Interlinguistic and Cross-disciplinary Genre Analysis.” Received for Publication: June 15, 2009; Acceptance for Publication: September 24, 2009. Published: November 2009.
- *Ray Cooke* and *Susan Birch-Becaas*. “Scientific Writing Assistance for Non-native Speakers of English: Shifting Right on the Interactivity Spectrum.” Received for Publication: March 27, 2009; Acceptance for Publication: July 29, 2009. Published: November 2009.
- *Raquel Criado*. “Teaching Methods and Their Conceptualisation from a Cognitive Perspective of Knowledge Acquisition.” Received for Publication: February 26, 2009; Acceptance for Publication: July 29, 2009. Published: November 2009.

## *RCEI* EDITORIAL PROCESS: 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

The average time that the *RCEI* editorial staff takes to publish an essay submitted to this journal is 8 months, from reading to accepting, editing, proofreading, and finally to print. Our reviewers are senior faculty, including members of *RCEI* Editorial Board, and those who have successfully been published in our journal or elsewhere.

### STATISTICS:

No. of essays submitted to *RCEI* 2009 issues: 25.

No. of essays accepted for publication in *RCEI* during 2009: 15.

Average number of reviewers per essay: 2,1.

Average time between submission and acceptance: 5 months.

Average time between acceptance and publication: 3 months.

60% of manuscripts submitted to *RCEI* 2009 issues have been accepted for publication.

## BOLETÍN DE INTERCAMBIO

Deseamos intercambiar la revista ..... por la revista ..... cuyos datos se adjuntan.

### DATOS

Razón social: .....

Persona responsable del intercambio: .....

Calle/Plaza: ..... C.P.: .....

Ciudad: ..... Provincia: .....

País: ..... Tlf.: .....

Fax: ..... E-mail: .....

## BOLETÍN DE SUSCRIPCIÓN

1. Por favor suscribame a ..... desde el año ..... núm. ...., inclusive.

2. Por favor deseo adquirir los volúmenes o números atrasados: .....  
.....

### FORMAS DE PAGO

- Adjuntamos talón bancario a nombre de Servicio de Publicaciones. Universidad de La Laguna.  
 Comprobante de haber enviado Giro Postal a nombre de Servicio de Publicaciones. Universidad de La Laguna.

Número suelto 14 euros.

Comunidad universitaria 10 euros.

### GASTOS DE ENVÍO

0,82 € – Nacional

2,72 € – Internacional

### DATOS PERSONALES

Nombre y apellidos o razón social: .....

N.I.F. o C.I.F.: ..... Calle/Plaza: .....

C.P.: ..... Ciudad: .....

Provincia: ..... País: .....

Tlf.: ..... Fax: .....

### ENVIAR A:

Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de La Laguna  
Campus Central, 38200. La Laguna. Santa Cruz de Tenerife  
e-mail: [svpubl@ull.es](mailto:svpubl@ull.es)

