

## INTRODUCTION

This issue of the *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* brings together a body of work in the discipline of English<sup>1</sup> for Academic Purposes. I include in this category discourse analysis of academic text, research into the teaching of English for Academic Purposes and research examining the processes of academic text production. Clearly one cannot be all-encompassing within the space limitations of a monograph such as this. What I have sought to do is to offer papers that represent key trends in EAP practice and research. I have also been fortunate enough to persuade a number of the key figures in the field to contribute and, serendipitously, it turns out that these individuals write from universities in Europe, America (both North and South), Asia and Australia. I would like to introduce the monograph by saying something about the history of the enterprise we know as EAP<sup>2</sup>.

Given the fact that the two previous linguistics issues of this journal were concerned with functional theories of language, it would seem appropriate to begin by locating the origins of EAP research and practice very much within a functional tradition. Howatt (1984) observes that the earliest materials produced for the teaching of EAP<sup>3</sup> owed a debt to Firthian linguistics and, particularly, to register analysis. Methodology was, at this early stage, largely based on linguistic description; features of a variety were introduced through example texts and accompanied by practice exercises. John Swales' *Writing Scientific English* (1971) is cited as one such example, though, at the same time, Howatt (*ibid.*) sees it as a precursor of much that would be produced in the later seventies and eighties. By then the impact of 'the communicative turn' in language teaching methodology had begun to be felt. This had led to three new approaches in EAP materials writing: the first of these involved drawing on discourse analysis and rhetoric, the second organised materials in terms of notions and functions (see Wilkins 1976) and a third approach, which Howatt associates with Christopher Candlin, at that time at the University of Lancaster, focuses on the future uses to which the learner would put the language.

Lancaster is one of a number of British universities that can be seen as pioneering the teaching of EAP and research into academic discourse<sup>4</sup>. Both activities were largely a response to an increase in numbers of non-English speaking background students enrolling at British universities, many of whom came to the UK under the auspices of the British Council. Interest in EAP in the USA arose, in part, in response to the same needs that British institutions had sought to fulfil, though there were also other concerns. Nystrand et al. (1993) in their history of composition studies suggest that the initial impetus grew out of a perceived crisis situation. The view was that the open admissions policy of the 1970s had brought about a decline in student academic literacy levels. Remedial academic literacy teaching was seen as the solution and the responsibility for this teaching fell to members of English departments. Literature teachers found themselves ill-prepared for the teaching



of academic writing and sought guidance wherever they could find it: in Classical Rhetoric, tagmemic and transformational linguistics, sociolinguistics, semiotics, problem solving, cognitive psychology and critical theory. One of the outcomes of their investigations was the growth of research interest in the cognitive processes involved in composing academic text. Bizzell (1992) provides a first person account of the same period charting her own thinking through the impact of Paolo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, to her initial encounters with and resistance to the work of Stanley Fish and Edward Said. Like many other US composition teachers and researchers this period ultimately led to her espousal of social constructionist views of (academic) discourse.

Bizzell's account brings us up to the present and to the contributions to this issue of the *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*. Readers will see that social constructionist views are prominent, though also represented here are cognitive approaches to the process of academic writing and several papers concerned with EAP pedagogy. A glance at the bibliographies will show that there is common ground between many, if not all of the writers publishing here. A range of links and complementary relationships can be drawn. Hence, the order in which I have presented the contributions is only one of several possibilities and I invite readers to approach this issue of the *RCEI* with whatever overarching schema suits them best.

I have chosen to open the volume with Brian Paltridge's essay because it has links to many of the other papers presented. It is also the contribution which most directly addresses the issues implicit in the title of the monograph. In his discussion of academic literacies (note the plural!), Paltridge makes it plain that many of the questions EAP researchers ask themselves remain those that were pressing for Bizzell in the 1980s. Academic genres are seen as entities that can be challenged and moulded by their users when social purposes themselves are seen to have changed and evolved. Rather than rigid models of text and prescriptions for practice, the emphasis here is on plurality and on making the socially-situated nature of academic genres transparent to students. Most importantly the task of the EAP professional is seen as

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<sup>1</sup> The focus here is *English*, though the history of the teaching of languages other than English for Academic Purposes is at least as long if not longer. There were, as, far back as the early seventies, compulsory courses in foreign languages for scientific purposes taught in the Science Faculty at the University of Melbourne (principally 'Science German' and 'Science Russian'). These were primarily reading courses, the argument being that there was a significant literature outside the mainstream English language publications to which even undergraduates required access.

<sup>2</sup> Last year (2001) saw the launch of the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, edited by Ken Hyland and Liz Hamp Lyons and published by Elsevier Science.

<sup>3</sup> The earliest example of published EAP materials mentioned by Howatt (1984) is R. MACKIN and A. WEINBERGER'S *El inglés para médicos y estudiantes de medicina* (London: Longman, Green, 1949).

<sup>4</sup> In addition to Lancaster, Howatt (1984:218) mentions Edinburgh, Essex, Leeds, Reading and London universities

helping students to develop a repertoire of linguistic practices which they can employ in accordance with the varying demands of social context.

I also believe that what Brian Paltridge has to say about the new challenges facing Australian and New Zealand universities will soon have relevance here in Spain. As the composition of student populations changes in parallel with broader demographic developments, Spanish universities too will have to find ways of accommodating 'generation 1.5 students', that is migrant students or residents born elsewhere. This, in turn, means that more needs to be known about Spanish for Academic Purposes or better *Español para Fines Académicos* (the Spanish acronym *EFA* is surely more felicitous than *SAP!*). Pedro Martín Martín's paper in this volume is a contribution to this expanding area of research. Françoise Salager-Meyer and her colleagues are also making rapid progress in providing accounts of the discourse practices of medical researchers writing in Spanish while here in La Laguna my colleagues and I are moving into the second year of the project the results of which Anna Fagan and I present in our paper. In this second phase we will compare our findings for English with a parallel corpus of research articles written in Spanish.

The next paper, Ken Hyland's account of the interactional nature of research papers, takes up many of the issues addressed by Paltridge. One particularly striking link is the discussion of the relationships between academic disciplines. Both writers draw on the work of Tony Becher (1989), as do Anna Fagan and I. Hyland's careful analysis of a large corpus of academic text drawn from eight disciplines throws up example after example of the ways in which writers go about making their texts "work to transform findings or reflections into academic knowledge". Hyland's position is as patently social constructionist as Paltridge's. His examination of the texts and the contexts of their production leads him to conclude that 'knowledge has to be seen as a rhetorical construct, socially created in particular disciplinary communities'.

The rhetorical and interactive qualities of academic text form the focus of the next three contributions to the volume. Pedro Martín Martín examines abstracts in the experimental social sciences written in both Spanish and English. On this occasion Martín Martín gives particular attention to writers' use of epistemic modality in their abstracts in a bid, once again, to persuade their readers to accept knowledge claims.

While Hyland and Martín Martín are concerned with texts as machines of consensus, Françoise Salager-Meyer's paper turns our attention to the rhetorical management of academic conflict or criticism, in this instance, in medical journal editorials. As Salager-Meyer tells us, the study she presents here is in fact an element in a much larger 'mosaic' of research on academic conflict which she and her colleagues in both Venezuela and Alicante have been conducting for some years now. Inspired by Salager-Meyer's work and by a research seminar she taught at the University of La Laguna in 2000, we too have embarked upon a study of academic conflict in this case from both a cross-disciplinary and cross-linguistic perspective. Anna Fagan and myself report the first phase of this study in our article.

This first group of papers is largely concerned with the written production of expert or professional writers. With Paul Thompson's contribution we turn our



attention to the concerns of the novice writer, in this case the PhD student. Paltridge raises a number of issues concerning the varying conventions of PhD and Masters theses and Thompson takes up one of these, citation practices, and examines it in detail, drawing particularly on the work of Nicholas Groom (2000). Thompson's research like Hyland's and that of my research group shows substantial variation across and within disciplines in terms of discourse conventions. Thompson's paper is explicit about the pedagogical implications and applications of his findings, advocating an approach where students research the discourse practices used in the genre they are seeking to produce.

The novice writer is also the focus of attention in Krystyan Spelman Miller's paper, though here we are given insights into the cognitive-textual processes involved in composing academic text. By means of an innovative analysis of pausing in written production, Spelman Miller is able to show differences between L1 and L2 writers and, indeed, between individuals in both groups. Differences in lengths and frequency of pauses were particularly noticeable on a discourse element Miller terms 'a framing device unit'. By means of these elements writers establish, maintain and develop discourse topic.

A third paper primarily concerned with the novice writer is that of John Flowerdew. Like Krystyan Spelman Miller, Flowerdew deals with textual organization, but the focus here is on a class of lexical items with an important role in cohesion in academic discourse. These he terms 'signalling nouns', providing a review of research into their nature and function and then offering a synthesis of the work carried out to date. He finishes with a call for the pedagogical exploitation of this impressive body of applied linguistics research.

This brings us to the last three contributions to the volume, all of which are directly concerned with the pedagogy of EAP. The first of these is Jennifer Thurstun's and Christopher Candlin's paper. Thurstun and Candlin have produced teaching materials in which they bring the findings of concordancing research on the vocabulary of academic English into the classroom<sup>5</sup>, thus partially responding to Flowerdew's plea. We meet some of the signalling nouns discussed by Flowerdew in their paper and are provided with a systematic account of how their materials might be used to develop EAP writing skills.

Another account of the use of EAP materials is to be found in Claire Furneaux's paper, which is concerned with what she terms 'the Cinderella skill', namely academic speaking. Once again there is an account of the rationale behind materials production and of the use of these materials<sup>6</sup> in classrooms in the UK.

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<sup>5</sup> Jennifer THURSTUN and Christopher CANDLIN's *Exploring Academic English* (Sydney: NCELTR, 1997) has been my set text on an EAP course here at the Universidad de La Laguna for several years now.

<sup>6</sup> A second element in this EAP course mentioned in note 5 has been Mark Rignall and Claire Furneaux's *Speaking* (Hemel Hempstead: Phoenix/Prentice Hall, 1997). Although the course

Some of the issues that Paltridge raises in relation to academic literacies emerge in Furneaux's paper. A second account of EAP pedagogy is provided by Amos Paran in his exploration of the teaching of EAP reading. Like speaking, the skills required for the reception of academic text have received less attention than production skills and even less attention has been paid to how teachers interpret EAP reading materials. Paran's contribution is therefore a particularly welcome one.

I have chosen to close the monographic section with my interview with John Swales. It is almost impossible to write about any aspect of EAP without invoking Swales and it seems only fitting that he should have the final word here, addressing many of the questions that have arisen throughout this issue. Each of the papers suggests a number of questions EAP researchers might pursue in the future, but John Swales' responses provide many more. The interview offers then both closure and aperture: an invitation and an impetus to further work.

Sally Burgess

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was written for the UK university context I have found it readily adaptable to the needs of my students here in Spain.

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