

Language Teaching and Testing

Selected Works of Renowned Applied Linguists

世界知名语言学家论丛（第一辑）

Series Editor: Rod Ellis

Ken Hyland (海亮)

学术写作英语

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世界知名语言学家论丛

第一辑

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出版说明

“世界知名语言学家论丛(第一辑)”由上海外语教育出版社约请国际知名学者、英语教育专家Rod Ellis教授担任主编。丛书作者均为国际应用语言学领域耳熟能详的权威专家。丛书中的每一本聚焦应用语言学领域的一个特定主题,收录一位在该研究领域最有建树和影响力的语言学家一生中最重要的经典文章,如: Rod Ellis:《语法学习与教学》; Paul Nation:《词汇学习与教学》; Charles Alderson:《语言测试》,等等。书中的每篇文章经由精心挑选,既有对某一领域理论主题的深入阐述,又探讨了对第二语言教学和测试颇具意义的话题;除了作者一生的代表性作品外,还有不少新作,体现了作者的思索过程和研究轨迹,也展示了应用语言学领域发展历程中理论和研究逐步完善的一个个精彩镜头。

相信本套丛书的出版定能为国内应用语言学研究提供一个新的平台,带来新的启示,进一步推动我国语言学研究的发展。

Preface

This book is a collection of articles for the series *Applied Linguistics for Language Teaching and Testing*. This series collects articles written by a number of leading applied linguists. Each collection focuses on a specific area of research in applied linguistics. Previous books have addressed the following topics: grammar learning and teaching, vocabulary language learning and teaching, task-based language teaching, second language motivation, language testing, and writing in a second language. The aim of each book is to bring together older and more recent articles to show the development of the author's work over his/her lifetime. The articles are selected to address both theoretical issues relevant to a particular area of enquiry and also to discuss issues of significance to the teaching or testing of a second language (L2). As a whole, the series provides a survey of applied linguistics as this relates to language learning, language pedagogy and language testing.

Each book begins with an autobiographical introduction by the author in which he/she locates the issues that have been important in his/her lifetime's work and how this work has evolved over time. The introduction also provides an outline of the author's professional career. The bulk of the book consists of chapters based on articles published over the author's lifespan. A concluding chapter draws together the various threads that have appeared in the previous chapters.

Each book, then, will contain articles that cover the author's career (over thirty years in some cases). Not surprisingly there are likely to be shifts (and possibly contradictions) in the author's positioning on the issues addressed,

reflecting the changes in theory and research focus that have occurred in the specific area of enquiry over a period of time. Thus, the articles will not necessarily reflect a consistent theoretical perspective. There is merit in this. Readers will be able to see how theory and research have developed. In other words, each book provides a snapshot of the kinds of developments that have occurred in the applied linguistic field under consideration.

This book brings together a collection of articles about writing with a focus on academic writing. Students for whom English is a second language are increasingly receiving their university education through the medium of English. One of the greatest challenges facing such students is learning how to write academic English. There is no better person than Ken Hyland to shed light on the difficulties that such students face and how teachers of writing can equip them with the skills they need.

Hyland has spent the better part of his professional life investigating academic writing and examining how it can best be taught. The chapters in this book provide information about how to research writing, the key features of academic writing, and the nature of different academic genres. It also offers different perspectives on how to teach writing. A key feature of the book is the use of written corpora for investigating different aspects of academic writing. Another key feature is Hyland's abiding concern with how writers position and present themselves through academic writing and the implications of this for learning how to do academic writing. As Hyland comments in his concluding chapter, "the study of academic writing is now a major industry", this book introduces readers to this "industry" in a series of informative and highly readable chapters.

Rod Ellis
Auckland
October 2011.

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Chapter 1

A Very Peculiar Practice

There is a view of identity that says that individuals are not a bundle of particular characteristics such as sincerity, vanity, selfishness or whatever, but the sum of the stories they tell about themselves. Stories are supposed to reveal the things that we look back on and think of as important in some way, so what we may have seen as just a series of random choices and actions at the time can come to look like a coherent direction to some goal. I mention this because it helps me to see my professional life as an academic career rather than a sequence of jobs and papers. I started out by simply using English as a means of travelling the world, working as an English language teacher to live in exotic places and meet interesting people. On the way, though, I found I enjoyed teaching, got interested in studying how people wrote and learnt to write, and picked up some qualifications along with some varied teaching experiences. All this has led to me sitting here in my office overlooking Hong Kong harbour on this summer's day as a professor of Applied Linguistics. In this first chapter I want to trace something of these apparently random hops from one country and job to another to make sense of this trajectory; to understand something of what it means to study and teach writing, and to explore this very peculiar practice.

Telling this story will, I hope, help to provide a context for the chapters that follow in this collection and a frame for my impressions of the way that academic writing has emerged as a distinctive and healthy field of endeavor in language research and teaching.

Feeling my way: working as an EFL school teacher (1977–1983)

I never really tried hard enough at school and left when I was 16 with two GCE O Level passes. One of them, it must be said, was English Language, but at that time I never thought a vague knowledge of grammar would be remotely useful to me. A few years after leaving school, however, I began to take an interest in social and political issues and went to evening classes then a technical college to collect the qualifications I needed to get into university. I studied Sociology at Warwick University and developed a strong interest in interaction and the ways we construct society by participating in it. A third year course on the Sociology of Language, taught by John Heritage — now one of the leading figures in Conversation Analysis — left me with a lifelong passion to understand how we actually make sense to each other.

Unable to get a grant to study for an MA when I graduated, I decided I might teach Sociology for a living and went to a Teacher Education College for a year to get a PostGraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). That spring I spent every Sunday in my flat writing job applications for schools and colleges all over the UK, but this was 1977, just two years before Margaret Thatcher was elected to form a government, and sociology teachers were not much in demand. My 60 application letters procured just one interview, which I declined. Then I saw a newspaper advertisement that changed the direction of my life forever: “Volunteer English teachers wanted in Sudan”. While I look back on living and travelling in the Sudan as one of the most worthwhile experiences of my life, the teaching there was unforgettable for different reasons. The White Nile Secondary School in Ed Dueim, a five hour bus ride through

the desert south of the capital, Khartoum, had dirt floors and precious few books, but a lot of students. Over 90 boys in each class, in fact, which meant my language drills and carefully designed tasks reached no further than the first three rows. I assume this did not matter very much as the textbooks were ancient and largely useless. They mainly asked students to put the right verb forms into gapped sentences and answer comprehension exercises about British cricketers and mountaineers.

The Sudan taught me that I knew almost nothing about language or how best to teach it and so, back in England for the summer, I took one of the first RSA Certificate courses in teaching English to speakers of other languages (later renamed CELTA-Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) at the Bell School and then got a job in a London language school to try out my new skills. There was a lot of confidence in TEFL in the late 1970s with plenty of prescriptive advice on how best to teach languages: This was the PPP era — Present, Practice, Produce — a three-step teaching sequence where the target structure is explained to the students, followed by controlled practice, then the production stage where students use this language in meaningful exchanges. Teaching involved talk, the L1 was taboo and conversational fluency was the main goal. Little space was given to writing unless it was to practice grammar. This approach is still widely used today, especially at lower levels of proficiency, but compared with the task-based approach which followed, it seems rather pedestrian and under-theorized.

The limitations of PPP became clear to me in my next two jobs. These were two years at a private school in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, teaching the sons of the Saudi royal family, and then three years in a secondary school in rural Malaysia near the Thai border, teaching the bare-foot children of rice farmers. PPP was deceptively successful. After years of drill-and-kill methods, students enjoyed the classes and seemed comfortable with the new language they were producing and using it accurately. But after a few lessons it was clear that the new structures either did not “stick”, so they were unable to produce the new language,

or they overused the target structure so that it sounded completely unnatural. These frustrations, both with my teaching and my limited knowledge of it, encouraged me to apply for an MA in applied linguistics that my employers in Malaysia, the Centre for British Teachers, was setting up in partnership with the University of Birmingham. This unique MA involved a member of the Birmingham staff, Malcolm Coulthard in the first year and Mike McCarthy in the second, living in Kuala Lumpur and touring the main towns in Malaysia every month or so to give seminars and set assignments for 20 of the CFBT teachers for a couple of years. John Sinclair, Professor of Modern English Language at the University of Birmingham, who was behind the project, called it “the Jungle MA”.

Learning my trade: the Jungle MA (1983–1984)

The MA was a fantastic, eye-opening experience which showed me that it could be productive for students to use language to complete a task without first deciding what that language should be. The MA also showed me the importance of analyzing texts to discover what their key features were, rather than relying on textbooks to tell me. I was lucky enough to be taught by two of the most accomplished applied linguists of the time as both Malcolm and Mike were (and remain) excellent discourse analysts who were able to transmit their skill and enthusiasm to their students. The MA course concluded with a term at Birmingham after completing my contract in Malaysia, and I spent the winter of 1983–1984 trudging over the hill, often in snow, from a freezing rented house in Stirchley to classes at the university taught by Tim Johns, John Sinclair, Malcolm Coulthard, Michael Hoey, Tony Dudley-Evans and others.

Here I encountered cutting-edge concepts in teaching such as computer-assisted language learning and English for Specific Purposes for the first time, but I foolishly skipped too many classes so that I could focus on my dissertation. This was supervised by Malcolm Coulthard and

critically analyzed different approaches to studying spoken interaction. But while I was given a prestigious prize for this work, I still kick myself for not taking advantage of the chance to learn more from these great figures. In particular, Tim Johns was developing innovative Computer-Assisted Language Learning programmes and activities based on corpora, where students were encouraged to explore authentic texts to understand how language is really used: a process he called Data-Driven Learning (DDL).

Birmingham, however, gave me a passion for discourse analysis and, fortuitously, an introduction to what we could learn from corpora. This is mainly because the department was led by John Sinclair, one of the greatest linguists of the late 20th century and an early champion of corpus linguistics. When I was there he was leading a project funded by the publisher *Collins* to create a large scale corpus which would form the basis of a dictionary for learners and other teaching materials. The corpus, known as the *Bank of English*, became the largest collection of English in the world and was used to develop the *COBUILD* dictionaries based on an analysis of frequency and the ways that people really use the language, rather than on intuition, which had been the case before then. The project revolutionized lexicography in the 1980s and encouraged me to think about the value of exploring using frequency as a measure of linguistic saliency and how collections of authentic texts can not only tell us something about language, but also something about writers on the basis of their linguistic choices.

Developing an interest: English for Specific Purposes (1984–1990)

I followed my MA by getting a job as a language teacher in a university, returning to Saudi Arabia, but this time to the cosmopolitan port city of Jeddah at King Abdulaziz University. Teaching science students in the English Language Centre at the university was my first encounter with English for Specific Purposes (ESP). I was fortunate in that this had been the site of a major pioneering initiative in ESP a few

years earlier where the British Council had set up a project to develop teaching materials based on the analysis of academic texts. By identifying key grammatical features of scientific writing, this team had created a strong ESP culture in the centre as well as collected an excellent bank of texts and activities. These materials showed me the value of using text analysis to identify the particular characteristics of specific kinds of writing, so that we could see what distinguished, say, biology from earth science texts and how these were different from newspaper articles and, popular science genres which are often used in writing classes.

While ESP was a relatively new development in 1984 when I arrived in Jeddah, the journal *English for Specific Purposes* had been around since 1980 and, as Swales' (1985) *Episodes in ESP* shows, research had been emerging since the late 1960s which sought to describe (mainly scientific) texts through the pioneering efforts of Ewer and Latorre (1969), Selniker (Selniker et al, 1981; Selniker et al, 1976), Trimble (1985) and Swales (1990) himself. ESP put writing back on the agenda after several years when grammar and conversational English dominated language teaching. Through the 1970s and 1980s cognitivists and structuralists had held the theoretical floor and university writing instruction had involved either using writing to disguise grammar teaching or watching students struggle through a series of process drafts. This was beginning to change in the mid-1980s and theoretical interest turned to analyzing the situations in which students would have to use language.

While researchers were beginning to look more closely at what academic discourse was really like, others were questioning the advice given in textbooks and style guides. Janet Holmes (1988), for instance, found massive discrepancies in the ways that hedging was presented in a selection of EFL textbooks compared with what went on in real life while Greg Myers (1991) showed that subject textbooks made poor teaching sources as they didn't represent the sort of interactions that students needed to write their own texts. This encouraged a drive for producing home-made materials as we responded to our students' need for scientific

language with a blizzard of photocopied texts and tasks. “Relevance” and “authenticity” were becoming the goals of academic writing instruction and publishers turned to the commercial possibilities of this new market with textbooks on specialized uses of English. The debate about whether we could respond to local needs with mass-produced textbooks was getting into full swing and continues today.

After four years in Jeddah I was ready for a change and in 1988 moved to the University of Technology in Lae, on the north-east coast of Papua New Guinea. In PNG I was lucky enough to work with leading ESP figures like Bill Robinson and Colin Baron, who were organizing their classes in innovative ways to link ESP tasks to students’ disciplinary work. Colin’s approach, for example, was to get his Civil Engineering students to design, build and test model rice silos and cranes using newspaper and string, then to write reports on the process (Baron, 1991).

I had also started to take an interest in genre, reading the work emerging from Australia by Jim Martin (1987) and Fran Christie (Christie, 1987; Christie & Martin, 1997) at that time. This interest became stronger when I saw how it could be used to support students’ learning in systematic ways, particularly through modeling texts and identifying key stages. The head of my department at UNITECH, Stewart Marshal, encouraged this by the success we had using a genre-based computer programme he had developed to give feedback to Engineering students on their reports on the design and testing of model bridges (Marshall, 1991). Through a series of prompts to the teacher, the programme generated comments on a student’s report giving evaluations and advice based on the generic structure he had identified. The programme was not only able to give more detailed feedback to students in this way, but helped to reinforce genre knowledge, strengthen an understanding of community conventions and give suggestions for improvement. This interest in genre led to the publication of my first proper research paper (Hyland, 1990). This appeared in *RELC Journal* and was based on an analysis of the argumentative essay scripts written by PNG High School students which

stood in piles around my office. Shortly after, and beyond my wildest dreams, my wife Fiona and I managed to publish a paper in *ESPJ* on syllabus types in ESP, based on our PNG business English course “Go for Gold” (Hyland & Hyland, 1992).

Doubting the consensus: some troubling issues

Back then it seemed like we had all the answers: The advice we got as teachers was to ignore our intuitions and write our syllabuses and materials using as detailed a needs analysis as time allowed, probably looking at the kinds of texts that our students had to read and write. We weren't, for the most part, too concerned with the possibility that different stakeholders, such as the institution, professional bodies, students and exam boards might have different perspectives, not that teaching methods that worked well in one culture might not transplant well to another. There was little thought given to individual student identities or what kind of needs analysis we should be conducting. But while ESP had reached a sound starting point with the question “why are these students learning English?”, some experts regarded needs analysis as an impartial and scientific process designed to measure goals with precision and accountability; a way of joining the dots between particular students and particular curricula (e.g. Munby, 1978). As teachers, however, we soon realized things were not this simple and through the 1990s increasingly gained confidence in our interpretations of both our students and our students' texts.

Also at that time, and this still haunts many English teachers today, was a concern about the depth of knowledge they needed if they were going to teach the students of that subject to write in English. Did we need special qualifications to teach medical or business English, for example? Increasingly, however, this confidence crisis has been replaced by a new self-image where teachers see themselves as literacy specialists and not subject specialists. There has been, I think, something of a