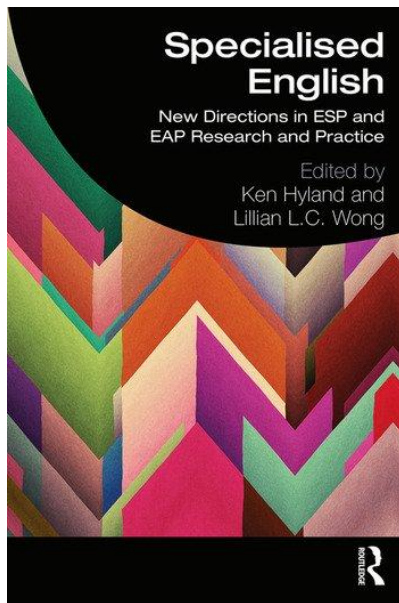


BOOK REVIEW



NEW FOCAL POINTS IN CRITICAL EAP AND ESP RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Ken Hyland and Lillian L. C. Wong (Eds.). SPECIALISED ENGLISH. NEW DIRECTIONS IN ESP AND EAP RESEARCH AND PRACTICE (2019), Abingdon, Oxon/New York, NY: Routledge. 274 pp., ISBN-978-1-1385-8875-2 (HBK) ISBN-978-1-1385-8876-6 (PBK) ISBN-978-0-4294-9208-2 (EBK).

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Specialised English: New directions in ESP and EAP research and practice is a collection of papers intended to introduce the reader to the latest avenues of research in the fields of ESP and EAP. The choice of the phrase *new directions* for the subtitle of the book is especially intriguing since it echoes similar, already-used titles or section headings (e.g. Belcher, Johns, & Paltridge, 2011; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013; or Starfield, 2014). Another intriguing aspect is the choice of the term *specialised English*, and not ESP, which gives this choice a very prominent position while “ESP” and “EAP” are later put on an equal footing (cf. Kenny, Işık-Taş, & Jian, 2020, where the title goes definitely for ESP although the volume contains chapters on academic writing). There seem to be at least two possible explanations for this; namely, the need to re-orientate or even narrow down the scope of *new* at the threshold of a new decade, and a conscious avoidance of putting only ESP into the limelight. Therefore, “new” in this book reads more as a selective *update* which, as suggested by the wording of title and subtitle, involves repositioning EAP in relation to ESP. The *upgrading* of EAP is probably due to the fact that one of the co-editors of the volume is a leading figure in EAP, Ken Hyland, whose long-standing trajectory of writings on the matter has culminated in presenting EAP as a fully-fledged discipline (see e.g. Hyland, 2018). A less personal

reason would be the editors' conscious adoption (see pp. 1-2) of a broad approach to the current essential role of the *ability* to communicate in English as a *way of responding* to the "complex and highly diversified" communicative demands of modern professions. With EAP (the academic context) on a par with ESP (the professional context), framing the book as "specialised English" makes full sense.

This edited collection opens with a preface by Brian Paltridge, who revisits the idea of "specificity in language teaching". The preface explains that the present book excels in showing how the matter of specificity can be "taken up in ESP classrooms and contexts" (p. xiii) while at the same time it underscores the importance of looking not only at texts and tasks, but also at the language, skills and practices that are appropriate to the purposes of communication in *particular* disciplinary and professional communities.

No surprise, then, that the Introduction by Ken Hyland and Lillian Wong should be followed by a series of parts that make three different types of voices heard. One is the voice permeating Part I (Chapters 1-5), which is a *critical* exploration of new directions as "conceptual issues in specialised language use". A second voice is that of Part II (Chapters 6-11), where the critical conceptual component is toned down in favour of an *analytical* look at texts with a certain emphasis on written discourse, and with a tinge of ethnography here and there. Finally, Part III (Chapters 12-17) gives voice to *practice-oriented* ideas resulting from classroom activities, again with academic writing and its genres in the spotlight, but including the various stakeholders in the process.

Chapters in Part I make it clear that there is still much need of *critical* research in response to the context of education globalisation and pressure from the woes of the publish (in English) or perish dilemma. In Chapter 1, Anna Mauranen provides arguments to support the idea of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as an instigator of change for English as a whole, and characterises ELF as a pluricentric "contact language" as well as a "dynamic system [that] organises and reorganises itself continually" (p. 19). The basis for this claim is an examination of the widespread use of ELF in academic contexts in terms of a tripartite methodology that ultimately seems to deprecate the initial *model* approach to ELF.

In Chapter 2, Jane Lockwood redirects ELF to the concept of "workplace English" and theorises it in a pedagogical sense. Lockwood's solution for the field of Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) is a cross-sectional framework of quadrants that involve different levels of syllabus work and expertise. With this multilayered analytical framework as applied to four case studies in Hong Kong, the author's ultimate goal is to prevent practitioners of BELF from being disappointed by the promises of commercially available solutions for training in *workplace English*.

Also influenced by the concerns of professional communication, the chapter by Vijay Bhatia (Chapter 3) illustrates the weight of interdiscursivity in professional communication. An important finding is that, despite their internal complexity, legal judgements are interdiscursively appropriated in the

construction of other genres such as newspaper or digital social media reports. This has pedagogical implications and, accordingly, the chapter includes a five-stage system for the design of English for Professional Communication programmes, particularly in legal communication.

Finally, Chapters 4 and 5 situate themselves closer to the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. John Flowerdew (Chapter 4) addresses the “very challenging task” (p. 60) of adopting a more assertive approach on the part of the EAP community in order to improve the marginal role that EAP has been assigned not only in the academy, but also in neoliberal universities. Flowerdew provides a profound understanding of EAP through an ample typology of power in that context so that EAP practitioners can engage in de-marginalisation on a solid conceptual basis. Nevertheless, in the final chapter of Part I, Alex Ding (Chapter 5) sounds a less positive note, and complains that the status and marginalisation of the practitioner have been “fleeting” tropes in the EAP literature. Like Flowerdew, he also echoes the need to take a tougher attitude towards EAP staff’s conditions of employment, and makes the effort to provide practitioners with reflexivity and identity tools to achieve the desired improvement.

Part II of the volume analyses exemplars of academic and professional writing in connection with some of the conceptual issues dealt with in Part I. Here, Lynne Flowerdew (Chapter 6) draws a comparison of learner and ELF corpus research of disciplinary writing. Her main conclusion is that in current corpus research to inform ESP pedagogy there is a lack of studies which shed light on differences and similarities in the areas of discourse structure, phraseology and pragmatic devices between ELF and *advanced* disciplinary writing.

Chapter 7, by Ken Hyland, is also concerned with academic writing, but, interestingly, applies a diachronic perspective to the study of persuasion and interaction in academic texts through the concepts of stance and engagement (Section 7.3). The main conclusion about changes in these rhetorical aspects is that they are slow but disciplinarily identifiable.

In Chapter 8, Ian Bruce opens the scope to professional writing, and proposes a holistic approach to investigating the issue of how *critical thinking* (making evaluative judgements) is expressed through written text. This chapter reads as a methodological reflection, too, since the author discusses the social genre/cognitive model at length (Section 8.2) as it becomes the cross-genre analytical method of choice.

Chapter 9 returns to academic discourse, but, as is the case with previous chapters, with a focus on less-used perspectives or sources. The authors, Averil Coxhead and Thi Ngoc Yen Dang, take a critical look at five existing single and multi-word vocabulary lists to show that high-frequency vocabulary plays a significant role in demonstrating content knowledge in academic speaking. Their study also reveals strong implications for EAP pedagogy.

Chapters 10 and 11, by Janet Holmes and Jean Parkinson, respectively, change tack, but coincide in studying related topics, language in the workplace and workplace genres, in the same geographical setting, New Zealand. In Chapter 10,

Holmes explains how the “dominant culture order” affects professional identities and workplace interaction patterns in the country, meaning that ways of doing things at work vary in different speech communities and different communities of practice or workplace teams. The author turns this potential source of confusion and misunderstanding for people moving between workplaces into a learning opportunity as manifested by the *Workplace Communication for Skilled Migrants* programme to which the Language in the Workplace Project (LWP) team has contributed (see Section 10.6).

In the final chapter of Part II, Parkinson considers how written and visual meaning work together in the multimodal text as exemplified by the “builder’s diary”, a workplace genre which has been adapted for educational use with carpentry trainees. The author suggests that the rhetorical strategies of visual meaning need to be taught in their own right, but in conjunction with move analysis. In this context, therefore, the ESP teacher should raise students’ awareness of the means of creating coherence between images and written meaning because they work together in the genre.

Part III of the volume emerges next as a finely interwoven display of EAP’s less-known concerns in terms of classroom practice. In the opening chapter (Chapter 12), Ann M. Johns explores the self-promotional genre of Personal Statement (PS) based on the process of PS writing by a group of immigrants who apply for admission to the University of California. As this part is practice-oriented, the chapter closes with the proposal of a succession of workshops in order to assist students to explore their readiness for university study.

The next two Chapters, 13 and 14, by Laurence Anthony and Lillian Wong, respectively, pivot on the same topic, the learning methodology known as DDL, Data-Driven Learning. In his chapter, Anthony brings to the book his software developer expertise in order to introduce the reader to the challenges associated with implementing DDL in the EAP writing classroom and offer insights on software tool development for effective DDL. In Chapter 14, the use of DDL is geared to postgraduate writing courses as an under-researched area. Although Wong is concerned with the introduction of DDL-focused materials into thesis-writing courses, both authors highlight the benefits of DDL for both EAP learners and instructors.

The book moves on to discuss the relationship between subject and EAP specialists in the chapters by Jill Northcott (Chapter 15), on feedback in academic writing courses, and by Yongyan Li and Margaret Cargill (Chapter 17), on the teaching of English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) courses. Curiously enough, these two analyses of the growing need for partnership are separated by Chapter 16, by Ursula Wingate and Eva Ogiermann, about the effect of teaching styles on the use of directives in academic writing tutorials. Nevertheless, the three chapters share the same focus on the achievement of effective EAP teaching, and the first two do have an element in common, the notion of *feedback*.

The aim of Northcott’s chapter is to characterise “effective feedback” for the

work of EAP units in one-year postgraduate programmes in the UK. She advocates “partnership” (pp. 224–225) between subject and writing tutors, since there are gaps in the former’s feedback on language which can only be filled by the latter, and proposes a sequence of collaboration where students should be given the opportunity for face-to-face dialogue with both sets of tutors.

Li and Cargill are less optimistic about the collaboration between content and language teachers; while Chinese students in ERPP courses argued that an ideal teacher would be someone who both has specialist background and knows the language (p. 247), in the Chinese literature surveyed for the chapter the authors found no mentioning of content teachers sitting in English teachers’ academic writing classes.

Wingate and Ogiermann’s concern with feedback is placed on the peer support system in which more experienced students support novice students from the same discipline. In these one-to-one tutorials, directives are one of the most frequent speech acts, and the authors suggest that the training of peer tutors should not be oriented towards the formulation of directives and their unilateral imposition, but towards their co-construction as the outcome of a dialogue with the student.

To sum up, the book reviewed has only small deficiencies (that amount to minor editorial errors) and a lot of strengths (the international gaze, the prominence of EAP, the novelty and singularity of its many topics and perspectives). It also shows a strong coherence and versatility, the internal organisation of the volume facilitates navigation considerably, and the Index is also very helpful as it is illustratively wide. Lastly, the volume seems to place more emphasis on the current status of EAP practice than on that of ESP practice. If this orientation is felt to be some kind of bias, the perception can always be compensated by the complementary orientation adopted by such books as Kenny et al. (2020), closer to professional contexts. Another minor caveat is the all-embracing readership envisioned by the publisher (see back cover). I agree with the editors, however, that it is “researchers and practitioners themselves” (p. 2) that constitute the principal audience of the volume on account of the high speed with which the field is moving, thus preventing much of the type of research presented therein from reaching its ultimate beneficiaries.

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