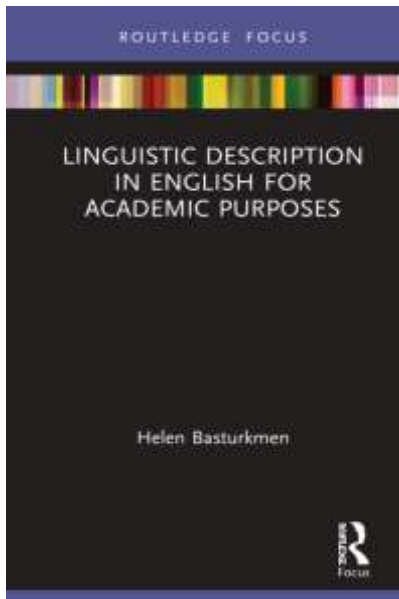


## BOOK REVIEW

---

---



### EAP: STATE OF THE ART

**Helen Basturkmen.** LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION IN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (2021), London/New York: Routledge. 112 pp., ISBN-978-0-815-39579-9 (HBK); ISBN-978-1-351-18318-5 (EBK).

195

---

Helen Basturkmen's book presenting the state-of-the art in the description of linguistic features of English used for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a welcome addition to the pool of the relevant literature in the field. She presents the academic community with a stepping stone in the considerations of EAP to support us in researching, teaching, and learning on the topic. The author grounds her deliberation in a blend of cutting-edge theoretical considerations and methodological suggestions exemplified by showcasing a selection of relevant work in the field. It is around these three concepts that Basturkmen builds her work to present the current state of the field and set ground for further research by proposing a welcome novelty, a classification framework to be used for future inquiry and description of academic English.

The book is organized into seven chapters covering the scope of the book, the theoretical and methodological background the current literature is based upon, the specificities of the general academic English register, study genres and events, professional research genres and events, disciplinary variation, and conclusions and future direction of EAP.

In the first chapter, entitled *The Expanding Terrain of EAP*, the author identifies the target audience and proposes a wide scope of the EAP field as the significance of EAP has grown substantially over the past decades, moving its focus from solely teaching to intricate analysis of context and discourse (Hyland & Jiang, 2021). Thus,

Basturkmen defines EAP widely, as a field that focuses on the linguistic features of academic English as well as the description of the types and formats of academic English written and spoken production in various contexts, i.e. instructed, naturalistic and disciplinary, and English Medium Instruction. She divides EAP-based research into two strands: English for study purposes (general academic and specific academic purposes) and English for professional academic purposes (research publication and instructional purposes). Correspondingly, the potential audience who are certain to find this text a reading of their immediate interest are EAP teachers, researchers, as well as higher education and high school teachers of disciplinary subjects. Moreover, scholars pertaining to different scientific areas are bound to be interested in the linguistic features of the genres used to present knowledge in academia. Finally, the widest circle of interested audience may be teachers working in the booming field of English Medium Instruction (EMI).

*Theory and Methodology* used in the studies of EAP is presented in the second, eponymous chapter. As the author points out, the book is based in half-a-century long research endeavours in the field. Linguistic description of EAP is performed by means of observation and analysis of academic or disciplinary discourse in the written (e.g. academic papers) and spoken (e.g. lectures) modalities to describe the conventions and practices of various disciplines that make use of EAP. Discourse analysis focuses on stretches of language, language in context, and naturally occurring and authentic spoken and written language data. The analysis is mainly performed using text analysis or the ethnographic approach, a promising research method following recent literature (see e.g. Guillén-Galve & Bocanegra-Valle, 2021). The author proceeds to discuss EAP learning pathways and the targets of EAP learning.

Chapters 3-6 are organized in the following, uniform fashion. Thematic introduction of the chapter is followed by the presentation of the relevance (the why) and nature (the how) of the description of the discussed topic. The author proceeds by showcasing the most prominent studies exemplifying each chapter's topics. The third chapter deals with *The General Academic English Register* focusing on the research carried out to unveil what grammatical forms and vocabulary items characterize the given register in its written and spoken modalities. The purpose of such endeavour has been to provide specific information about the lexico-grammatical features pertaining to academic English and disciplinary registers so that this content may be explicitly taught. Basturkmen continues to present five studies employing the corpus-based approach to investigate the grammatical and lexical elements characterizing the general academic English register. She presents Biber and Gray's (2010) work, in which they point out the strategy of grammatical compression in academic writing, and contrasts their findings with Liardét, Black, and Bardetta's (2019) investigation of the features that give the impression of informal style in academic writing. Basturkmen proceeds to present the creation of a (new) academic word list in Coxhead's (2000) work that was further elaborated on and discussed by Coxhead and Nation (2021). Simpson-Vlach and Ellis's (2010)

Academic Formulas List methodology design is described. Finally, the author presents the corpus-based analysis performed by Miller (2020) to provide the frequency and usage of idioms in academic English.

Linguistic inquiry into *Study Genres and Events* commonly occurring in the lives of students who regularly use EAP is covered in Chapter 4. The mentioned genres and events may be written, such as students' written assignments, or spoken, such as lectures and discussion classes. The focus of this genre-based approach is on the qualitative analysis of the structure and organization of these events, and results of the given discussion are aimed at educators, applied linguists, and EAP professionals. Some research methodologies applied here are the genre-based approach aimed at the classification of text types, the analysis of speech acts, corpus-based analysis to investigate the frequency of the linguistic forms typical of a certain genre, and text analysis of the schematic structure of a genre to identify its sequence of moves – i.e. stretches of language serving a precise communicative function. Basturkmen proceeds to present three related studies showcasing discourse-related elements. Out of the thirteen genres identified by Nesi and Gardner in 2012 Basturkmen chooses to elaborate on the concept of essay as a family of six genres (exposition, discussion, challenge, factorial, consequential, and commentary), whose common aim is to develop an argument; yet differences are found in how this is done. The author moves on to present Deroey and Taverniers's (2012) qualitative analysis of lecture transcripts based on the British Academic Spoken Language corpus. They provide a classification of functions in the language use of lecturers pertaining to four disciplinary fields, graduate and postgraduate levels, and addressing small and large student groups. Basturkmen finalizes this chapter with a description of a study of her own published in 2003 in which she looked into differences in the interaction in a student discussion group before and after a teacher unexpectedly arrived. She used the exchange structure approach in which an exchange is found to be the basic unit of interaction between more participants.

Chapter 5 focuses on the *Professional Research Genres and Events* that are crucial for research and publication in academia, with a particular focus on research articles, but also conference presentations and grant proposals. These activities are now predominantly carried out in English as this global language has assumed the role of the lingua franca in academic publishing, thus yielding Anglocentric norms as the requirement of academic success for both native and non-native English language speakers. The author stresses that both, but especially the latter, may be aided by the findings of EAP research. Research in the field often assumes the description-of-moves approach that Basturkmen presents by showcasing Halleck and Connor's (2006) study on the moves in TESOL conference proposals. This is complemented by a presentation of Wulff, Swales, and Keller's (2009) study on conference presentations whereby the authors identify classes of discourse patterns used in conference presentations and the subsequent discussion sections. A merger between the move and corpus analysis methodologies is presented in the

description of Xu and Nesi's (2019) paper on evaluation strategies in the introductions of research articles.

Chapter 6 entitled *Disciplinary Variation* undertakes to detect differences in the usage of English across various academic disciplines as disciplinary-specific language usage is considered to reflect the ways and traditions embedded in the corresponding disciplinary discourses. Drawing on Hyland (2006), Basturkmen points out three approaches used in teaching EAP, namely the skills approach (focusing on the development of a set of generic skills used in education), the socialization approach (introducing learners to the discipline-specific practices), and the academic literacies approach (enabling learners to engage in their fields as scholars). In terms of methodology, Basturkmen points out the comparative genre analysis as a comparison of practices between and across genres, whose aim is to bring to the surface the distinctive features of certain disciplinary practices. The author goes on to stress corpus analysis as an often-preferred approach in studying the occurrence and use of common linguistic features in a focal discipline. Disciplinary variation has been found in the moves of three-minute oral thesis presentations from various disciplines and following the discussion in Hu and Liu (2018). The authors identified six obligatory and two optional moves whose usage likelihood differed across a proposed grid of soft/hard and pure/applied categories of disciplines. She chooses Hyland and Jiang's (2018) study as an exemplary examination of the differences in the use of metadiscourse in the academic writing across disciplines over a 50-year long period of time. The chapter concludes by presenting Green and Lambert's (2019) work on developing discipline specific phrase-lists for eight secondary school subjects.

198

Chapter 7 presents *Conclusion and Future Directions* and culminates in Basturkmen's proposal of the "Classification Framework for Inquiry and Description of Academic English" whereby the author provides the book readers with a means to classify an EAP sample. In the Framework Basturkmen lays out the EAP topic areas she has covered in Chapters 3 to 6 of her book: the general academic register, study genres and events, professional research genres, and disciplinary variation. These topics are crossed with six aspects that may be the focus of EAP inquiry: data (written and/or spoken texts), scope (text or text and context), setting (students of various levels of education or faculty), linguistic focus (lexico-grammatical, rhetorical, metadiscourse, speech functions), discipline(s), and nature of description (synchronic or diachronic). Moreover, Basturkmen identifies genre-targeted discourse analysis and corpus analysis as the preferred methods of the field and specifies the relevant research gaps. She points out that studies of EAP in secondary school, undergraduate writing and descriptions of spoken academic English as well as genres other than research article are still relatively scarce. Also, studies of contextual factors should be more numerous (Swales, 2019). Scholars today are required to publish in English, which entails adherence to the ways of the Anglophone academic milieu. In seasoned academics this knowledge is oftentimes tacit, as Basturkmen points out, and there is a strong necessity to make this

knowledge explicit in the attempt to teach it to the junior members of the academic community.

The relevance of EAP has long been recognized and has culminated in the current necessity of a number of students of various first language backgrounds who are educated in the English language, but also scholars who are oft required to teach in English and publish in the English language or perish in academia. Basturkmen's book provides the ever-widening circle of the EAP community with a go-to text that brings an overview of the relevant literature and research endeavours in one place. This reading is a must for scholars researching as well as academics and teachers using English in educational and scholarly settings.

[Review submitted 8 Nov 2021]

[Revised version received 16 Nov 2021]

[Accepted for publication 25 Nov 2021]

Reviewed by **KRISTINA CERGOL**  
Faculty of Teacher Education  
University of Zagreb  
Croatia  
*kristina.cergol@ufzg.hr*

### References

- Biber, D., & Gray, B. (2010). Challenging stereotypes about academic writing: Complexity, elaboration and explicitness. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 9(1), 2-20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2010.01.001>
- Coxhead, A. (2000). A new academic word list. *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Quarterly*, 34(2), 213-238.
- Coxhead, A., & Nation, P. (2021). The specialized vocabulary of English for academic purposes. In J. Flowerdew, & M. Peacock (Eds.), *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes* (pp. 252-267). Cambridge University Press.
- Deroey, K. L. B., & Taverniers, M. (2012). Just remember this: Lexicogrammatical relevance markers in lectures. *English for Specific Purposes*, 31(4), 221-233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2012.05.001>
- Green, C., & Lambert, J. (2019). Position vectors, homologous chromosomes and gamma rays: Promoting disciplinary literacy through Secondary Phrase Lists. *English for Specific Purposes*, 53, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2018.08.004>
- Guillén-Galve, I., & Bocanegra-Valle, A. (Eds.) (2021). *Ethnographies of academic writing research: Theory, methods, and interpretation*. John Benjamins.
- Halleck, G. B., & Connor, U. M. (2006). Rhetorical moves in TESOL conference proposals. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 5, 70-86.
- Hu, G., & Liu, Y. (2018). Three minute thesis presentations as an academic genre: A cross-disciplinary study of genre moves. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 35, 16-30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.06.004>
- Hyland, K. (2006). *English for academic purposes: An advanced resource book*. Routledge.

- Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. (2018). "In this paper we suggest": Changing patterns of disciplinary metadiscourse. *English for Specific Purposes*, 51, 18-30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2018.02.001>
- Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. (2021). A bibliometric study of EAP research: Who is doing what, where and when? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 49, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2020.100929>
- Liardét, C. L., Black, S., & Bardetta, V. S. (2019). Defining formality: Adapting to the abstract demands of academic discourse. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 38, 146-158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2019.02.007>
- Miller, J. (2020). The bottom line: Are idioms used in English academic writing and speech? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2019.100810>
- Nesi, H., & Gardner, S. (Eds.) (2012). *Genres across the disciplines: Student writing in higher education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Simpson-Vlach, R., & Ellis, N. C. (2010). An academic formulas list: New methods in phraseology research. *Applied Linguistics*, 31(4), 487-512. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amp058>
- Swales, J. M. (2019). The futures of EAP genre studies: A personal viewpoint. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 38, 75-82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2019.01.003>
- Wulff, S., Swales, J. M., & Keller, K. (2009). "We have about seven minutes for questions": The discussion sessions from a specialized conference. *English for Specific Purposes*, 28(2), 79-92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2008.11.002>
- Xu, X., & Nesi, H. (2019). Evaluation in research article introductions: A comparison of the strategies used by Chinese and British authors. *Text and Talk*, 39(6), 797-818. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2019-2046>