Introduction to IAWE15 Panel
Convergence and Diversity in Academic Writing

Concepts and research methodologies in academic writing: corpus-linguistic and cultural approaches

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http://www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/english/ling/presentations_js.php
1. Concepts of and in Academic English

Academic English, an old and a new field
English for Academic Purposes (EAP), etc.

new theoretical basis: from Swales to Hyland
= initiation into the culture and practices of various ‘discourse communities’ (Swales 1990).

From a social constructionist point of view,
‘writing is always a personal and socio-cultural act of identity whereby writers both signal their membership in a range of communities, as well as express their own creative presence’ (Hyland 2006: 35).

3 levels of communities:
undergraduate
graduate
postdoc
Discourses in Academic English
EAP: the Genre Approach

**research “output”**
- research article
  - book reviews
  - project proposals
  - conference presentations

**teacher “talk”/ e-learning**
- ppt presentations
  - lectures
  - student presentations
- textbooks
  - Wikis
  - www pages

**science “journalism”**
- popular science articles
  - popular blogs (David Crystal)
  - popular science films (Horizon)
- popular science books

**student “literacy”**
- fieldwork notes / essays
- thesis
- seminar presentations
Three Levels of Academic Writing / EAP

Student EAP: "digesting" research
incl. independent search for appropriate information, its critical evaluation and media-specific presentation
prototype genre: essay (1-5,000 words)

Doctoral EAP: "developing" research
national?
incl. a long-term independent research agenda and presentation of result of a sophisticated innovative project
with subject-specific conventions (MLA, ASA/APA)
prototype genre: PhD thesis (50,000- words?)

Research EAP: participating in research discourse
international
incl. peer-review procedures and the corresponding discourse with subject- and journal-specific conventions
prototype genre: research article (5,000-20,000 words)
2. Examples of Academic Writing

**African:**

ICE-EA = Tanzania / Kenya

*Nordic Journal of African Studies* (Helsinki)

**German:**

ChemCorpus
Student EAP: Civilization (ICE-EA/ W1A007K)

Another social scientist, **V. Gordon Childe** defined civilization as being the city. He [R1] coined the term, "urban revolution" to characterise the achievement of civilization. To him [R2], terms "civilization" and "urban revolution" are <+-_equalent>. He [R3] stated that the urban revolution was the culmination of a process of progressive change in economic structure and social organization; the city was the "resultant and symbol" of this revolution. He [R4] cited ancient Mesopotamia as having had a parallel and direct link between development of cities and civilization. Among the qualities of civilization according to Childe [R5] include a stratified social structure, a highly differentiated occupational hierarchy, a well defined political structure, and integration as being fostered through a state ideology which reaffirm the basic unity of the society. He [R6] contented that "city" and "civilization" have all these characteristics and hence are the same and one.

*R1-6 = reference to theme/topic approach: information management (theme)*
Research EAP


Prospective Commitment in African Literature
GEORGE D. NYAMNDI
University of Buea, Cameroon

ABSTRACT

African literature’s close, even organic link with the society that generates it settles a pathfinder role on that literature: Africa goes where its literature takes it. This fact does not seem to have been the object of enough awareness on the part of the writers themselves as they have tended to construe their role mainly in terms of rescuing their past from oblivion and/or denigration. And yet a more urgent mission awaits them: that of providers of constructive alternatives susceptible not only of cleansing the continent’s image but even more importantly of moving the society forward in the right direction. Retrospection in the service of prospection ought to be the new creative order.

Keywords: Pilgrimage, Prospection, Retrospection, School

1. INTRODUCTION
3. Functions and Forms

A clear analysis of the form–function relationship is the basis for corpus-linguistic studies since corpus-analysis tools (AntConc) are based on form.
Linguistic Features: function -> form

**research articles**
- novelty & -> lit. review -> evaluation, boosters
- stance & -> hedging
- complexity: ontology hyponyms

**instruction**
- macro-/ micro-structuring
- meta-discourse
  - interpersonal
  - attitudinal
  (compare MI CASE)

**science journalism**
- metaphors
- multimedia text/ image/ sound

**student papers**
- argumentation structure
- coherence -> cohesion
4. Methodologies of Annotation and Analysis

functional approaches by Halliday

style pattern approaches from Kaplan to Biber

norms and critical discourses:
  from Quirk / Kachru to Fairclough and Phillipson

4 panel collaborators contribute
4 case studies from Research English to Student English
Research Question: Convergence or Diversity?

How much convergence do we want in research English?
How much diversity do we accept in student English?
Which features do we want to reduce or increase?
5. Projects: Real Language Data

- Comparative ICE
- Nordic Journal Corpus:
  example: adjuncts = explicit coherence
- Chemnitz Corpus of student English:
  example: hedges in female/male student theses
African Research EAP (Nordic Journal Corpus)

English as an Academic *lingua franca* mainly for African scholars

22 articles by African/Cameroonian scholars and Europeans (UK, SF) for comparison

= non-native, less strict gatekeeper

variables

- name
- first language?
- nation
- affiliation
- exposure?
- age?
# Adjuncts in the Nordic Journal Corpus

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Chemnitz Corpus of Student English (ChemCorpus)

data collection in our own department (for BA theses and beyond)

written:
• MA theses
• BA theses
• MA final papers
new translation and essay-writing tests on-line?

oral:
• placement test interviews
• ppt presentations
Hedging in German Student Writing: female > male in MA theses?
6. Conclusion: Applications

- **practical:**
  - compare national (discipline) cultures
  - develop a WWW data base: EAPworld?

- **theoretical:**
  - compare usage preferences in EAP / New Englishes to understand sequences of cognitive conceptualisation?

- **teaching:**
  - exchange data
  - integrate EAP analysis early into the curriculum