PART I

ISSUES IN ENGLISH FOR
ACADEMIC PURPOSES

Introduction

This first part of the two-part collection, *Research Perspectives on English for Academic Purposes*, presents a state-of-the-art collection of research and critical review studies of key issues in the field. Issues included in the collection are as follows: EAP and language planning, linguistic research related to EAP, the application of linguistic research to EAP, the concept of International Scientific English, the role of background knowledge in EAP competence, EAP testing and World Englishes, appropriate pedagogy in peripheral ESL contexts, the notions of power, culture and discourse community, and issues surrounding the international EAP placement tests TOEFL and IELTS.

The first, introductory chapter, by the editors, provides an overview of some of the key issues in EAP – the global need for English, the development of EAP as a discipline, the various types of EAP, EAP's defining characteristics, language description in EAP research, narrow versus wide angle perspectives on course design, collaboration with subject specialists, ethnography and culture, and critical perspectives.

The first chapter of the main body of Part I, on EAP and language planning by Chris Kennedy, begins by considering the growth of English worldwide, which Kennedy sees as a largely unplanned change. He then moves on to look at attempts by various bodies to control or expand the spread of English as an international language. This control is attempted through language planning, of which there are various types. Following on from there, Kennedy considers the need for English in academic situations and the language planning which has occurred in order to fulfil this need. Issues that arise here are links or the lack of them between higher level and lower level planning, cultural aspects in EAP and pedagogic models of language. Finally, Kennedy addresses the question of evaluation of the response of EAP to the demands created by English as an international language and by specific language policies.

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Following the chapter by Kennedy, two contributions are devoted to the topic of linguistic research and EAP. Language description has been fundamental to EAP research, designed as it is to gain insight into the target discourses that confront students who are not native speakers of English. In the first of these two chapters John Swales, regarded by many as the doyen of the discipline, describes the historical development of language description, the beginning of which he traces back to the 1960s. Swales identifies each decade since then as making its own distinctive contribution. In the sixties the emphasis was on syntax and lexis. The seventies were characterised by innovative textbook projects, major EAP projects and methodological ferment. In the eighties there was a great deal of work in various types of discourse analysis, a revival of contrastive rhetoric, an appreciation of the socially constructed nature of academic language and an emphasis on disciplinary differences. Moving into and through the 1990s, we find the discipline marked by the use of technology (corpus linguistics and CALL), genre analysis and ethnographic studies. Most research has focused on the research article, but there has also been interest in lectures, oral presentations, and theses and dissertations. In his final section, Swales discusses two contemporary issues: the questioning of the notion of EAP as the acquisition of increasingly more complex generic forms on the grounds that induction into the disciplinary culture is not as 'neat' as this scenario portrays it to be, and the influence of critical pedagogy as discussed in Flowerdew and Peacock's introductory chapter.

While Swales's chapter focuses on linguistic research per se and its developing approaches and methodologies, albeit directed with a pedagogic goal in mind, Brian Paltridge in his chapter is concerned with the application of linguistic research in EAP. The first part of Paltridge's chapter reviews the different ways of teaching the various academic genres which have been informed by linguistic research. This review is followed by a case study of how Paltridge has applied genre analysis research in his teaching of academic writing. The case is illustrated by examples of work produced by a student from the People's Republic of China, writing a Master's thesis at an Australian university. Paltridge's chapter concludes with suggestions for teaching other academic genres, other skills and teaching at lower proficiency levels.

Caroline Clapham, in her chapter, investigates the important question of the relation between subject knowledge and EAP reading ability. In particular, she investigates the hypothesis that there might be a threshold level below which it is not possible to activate subject-specific background knowledge in text comprehension. Based on a

large-scale empirical study, Clapham finds partial support for the threshold level hypothesis, especially where texts are highly subject specific. Apart from this, however, her findings also suggest that background knowledge becomes less important at higher ability levels, as learners become able to make use of all the linguistic cues in any given text. Clapham's results have important implications for both text selection in EAP reading comprehension and for the on-going debate concerning the relative merits of wide-angle and narrow-angle EAP syllabus design.

The next three papers in the collection all relate in one way or another to the question of World Englishes. In the first of these, Alistair Wood makes the case for a separate and distinct International Scientific English, particularly as it relates to the research article, a genre which, Wood argues, is determined and defined by the discourse community that creates it. Noting that non-native speakers may be at a disadvantage compared with native speakers when it comes to publishing the results of their research in international refereed journals, Wood argues that as non-natives are increasingly likely to become the majority, they will be the group who decide what constitutes appropriate scientific English. His case is supported by an empirical study of a corpus of scientific research articles designed to estimate the proportion of authors who are non-native speakers. Wood's research has important implications for EAP pedagogy. The pedagogic model should not be the prescription of the native speaker non-scientist, Wood claims, but the practice of scientists, of whom many are non-natives. It is important to note that Wood is only concerned with the natural sciences. The humanities and social sciences, Wood notes, have different, less international, rhetorical traditions.

Like Wood, Liz Hamp-Lyons and Bonnie Wenxia Zhang are also interested in what should be the appropriate model of English in EAP. Their perspective is rather different, however. They are concerned with what should be valued as a model in test development and use. Their research is prompted by calls from some language testers that high-stakes examinations should be rethought to take account of the multiplicity of World Englishes. In the empirical part of their chapter, Hamp-Lyons and Zhang report on the behaviour of raters focusing on the rhetorical patterns of candidates in a university-level essay test paper. Issues raised include the raters' level of tolerance of rhetorical diversity, the appropriacy of 'non-native-like' rhetorical patterns, the selection and training of raters and the implications of the study for English language writing assessment in localised and international contexts.

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Like Hamp-Lyons and Zhang, and Wood, Suresh Canagarajah again considers the question of appropriate models of English for EAP. Taking a critical stance, Canagarajah reviews the dominant approaches to the teaching of academic writing in English as a Second Language (ESL). He finds the various approaches all deficient in not taking on board the important issues of culture differences and power as they influence ESL students in peripheral countries. He therefore argues for a focus on social contexts of writing where all the relevant cultural and political conditions influencing the students are taken into account. The approach is exemplified by means of a case study of a Sri Lankan student, which highlights the sorts of issues the approaches to writing reviewed in the first part of the chapter fail to address. The case study shows how the student, in confronting these issues, is able to produce a hybrid text that can be academically effective while reconciling the ideological struggles faced in academic writing in English. In addition, the case study questions a range of assumptions which the dominant approaches make about ESL students, e.g. that they are not total strangers to academic discourses, and that writing is a process of moving in a linear manner from the native to the non-native discourse.

Sue Starfield's chapter, like Canagarajah's, is grounded in the contextual parameters of culture and power. Her starting point is the notion of discourse community and the traditional conception of the role of EAP as inducting students into such communities by making their norms and conventions explicit. Echoing a concern raised by Swales in his chapter, Starfield argues that such a notion of discourse community – while bringing a welcome social dimension to teaching and learning – is monolithic and undifferentiated, tending to assume a homogeneous, unconflictual situation, free from the wider power relations which shape the social context. Basing her argument on a study of a social sciences department at a South African university, Starfield demonstrates that the black students, in particular, through their writing, struggled to negotiate entry into this complex community while academic staff were far from unanimous as to what constituted the criteria for successful access. Meaning was not fixed but subject to constant negotiation and renegotiation among the members of the departmental discourse community, with power relations and the status of the different members, as shaped by the wider social forces, affecting the outcomes. Starfield concludes that attempts to teach academic writing within a disciplinary context need to be based on careful ethnographic study of the target contexts, collaboration with content specialists and encouragement of students

to themselves become ethnographers in the academic culture (Johns, 1988: 57).

In the final chapter in Part I, with the contribution of Geoff Brindley and Steven Ross, we turn to assessment issues. As in the majority of the chapters, Brindley and Ross begin with a critical review of the issues involved in their chosen area, the construction and use of large scale international tests of tertiary entry such as TOEFL and IELTS. These two tests are perhaps the most powerful gate-keepers in EAP, deciding which students will be allowed to study in English-speaking institutions, not only in the English-speaking countries of the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but also, increasingly, in other countries where English is not the national language but is used as a language of tertiary-level instruction. Brindley and Ross review a number of key issues with regard to these two tests, including the following: the way in which academic language proficiency is conceptualised by such tests; the question of content relevance, test score interpretation, test impact and use, and their relation to decisions on university admission; ways of assessing progress and achievement in EAP programmes; collaborative assessment involving subject specialists; and the related question of the overlap between assessment of language and the assessment of subject knowledge.

In the second, empirical part of their chapter, Brindley and Ross address the interface between TOEFL and the development of EAP listening, using longitudinal data from EAP listening course achievement outcomes and their relationship to TOEFL listening gain scores. The research focuses on the interface between syllabus content coverage, academic lecture simulation and classroom assessment of achievement. The chapter concludes with implications for programme evaluation in the light of comparisons of courses that do or do not affect TOEFL listening gain scores.

1 *Issues in EAP: A preliminary perspective*

John Flowerdew and Matthew Peacock

The need for English

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) – the teaching of English with the specific aim of helping learners to study, conduct research or teach in that language – is an international activity of tremendous scope. It is carried out in four main geographical domains, each of which exhibits particular characteristics and purposes. It is carried out, first, in the major English-speaking countries (the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand), where large numbers of overseas students whose first language is not English come to study. It is conducted, second, in the former colonial territories of Britain (and less importantly the United States) where English is a second language and is used as the medium of instruction at university level. It is conducted, third, in countries which have no historic links with English, but which need to access the research literature in that language (the countries of Western Europe, Japan, China, Latin America, Francophone Africa and others).[1] And finally, EAP is now increasingly being offered in the countries of the former Soviet-bloc, as they seek to distance themselves from the influence of Russia and its language and position themselves as participants in the increasingly global economy and academic community.

To give some indication of the demand for EAP, if we take the first of the four areas mentioned – the countries where English is a first language – in 1996–7, 457,984 foreign students were studying in the US (Davis, 1997) and 198,064 in the UK (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 1997). While these numbers are already very considerable, they are likely to comprise only a minority of the likely target EAP population. To start with, the figures for the US

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[1] Some of these countries (e.g. Germany) are now indeed offering academic programmes of their own through the medium of English.

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Table 1. *Native speakers of the world's major languages*

Mandarin	863
Hindi	357
Spanish	352
English	335

(*Source:* '*The World Almanac and Book of Facts*' [1998])

do not include the large number of ESL students – usually the children of immigrants – who have American citizenship. But more importantly, far more students are likely to require EAP in many of the post-colonial countries (e.g. Nigeria, India or Hong Kong), where there are many English-medium universities, and the countries in which English has no official status (e.g. many Latin American countries), where many students are required to take English, often EAP. Unfortunately, figures are not available for these countries.

One might imagine that the dominance of English as an international language is due to the fact that it is the language which has the greatest number of native speakers (NSs). However, this is not the case. According to *The World Almanac and Book of Facts* (1998), English is only the fourth language in the world in terms of the numbers who speak it as their first language; it is surpassed by Mandarin, Hindi and Spanish respectively (Table 1). However, English is by far the most popular language to learn as a second or foreign language.

Why is it, then, that so many non-native speakers (NNSs) want to learn English in preference to the world's other major languages? One important reason is undoubtedly to do with economic strength. As Graddol (1997) points out, in order to conduct trade one is likely to be more successful if one speaks the language of the customer. In terms of economic strength, the countries where English is the first language are by far the richest (Table 2). The economic power of these countries (most notably the United States) and the accompanying trend in using English for international business are strong reasons for NNSs to want to learn English. If one compares Table 1 with Table 2, it is notable that while the English language is only fourth in terms of the number of NSs (Table 1), English-speaking countries come out well above all other countries in terms of economic strength (Table 2). Chinese drops from first to seventh, Hindi drops down from second to twelfth, and Spanish declines from third to fifth.

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Table 2. *The world's major languages and the economic strength of
the countries where it is the first language*

	$billion
English	4,271
Japanese	1,277
German	1,090
Russian	801
Spanish	738
French	669
Chinese	448
Arabic	359
(Hindi/Urdu – 12th)	

(*Source:* Graddol [1997])

NNSs, of course, are not only attracted to learn the language of
the English-speaking countries[2] because they want to sell their
products there. They also want to gain access to their technology and
expertise. This is another reason for the large numbers of overseas
students studying in the English-speaking countries and the even
greater numbers studying through the medium of English in their
home countries, where it is a second language. The international
language of research and academic publication is English and anyone
who wishes to have ready access to this material needs to know the
language.

The development of EAP as a discipline

If the economic and demographic factors just referred to provide a
reason for the large numbers of NNSs learning and studying through
the medium of English, they do not explain the development of EAP
as a discipline. For this we need to turn to developments in
linguistics, or more specifically applied linguistics, developments
which took place primarily in Great Britain.

At the same time as English was beginning to establish itself as a
World language in the newly independent countries of Africa and
Asia, following pioneering work by Firth, British linguists (most
notably Halliday) began to view language and language teaching in a
new way. In contrast to theoretical linguists who traditionally saw

[2] This basically means the United States, which is far wealthier than any of the other
English-speaking countries.

language as an abstract system, these applied linguists started to consider it as a resource for communication, a resource which varied in its application according to the context or situation in which it was produced. The ramification for language teaching of this per-spective was that learners who mastered a language as an abstract system, as was the case with those who learned using the audio-lingual approach, which was prevalent in language teaching (espe-cially in North America) during the 1960s, would not be prepared to communicate in the specific situations they were likely to find themselves when they wanted to use the language. What was needed was an approach to language teaching which was based on descrip-tions of the language as it was used in the specific target situations. The rationale for such an approach was set out in a seminal publication by Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1964), *The Lin-guistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. In this book Halliday *et al*. presented the concept of register analysis, the description of language varieties used in particular disciplines or occupations, based on statistical differences in lexis and syntax. As we shall see below, this book was very influential in encouraging theoretical work in lan-guage description and in its application to the production of EAP teaching materials.

Classifying EAP and its branches

EAP is normally considered to be one of two branches of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the other being EOP (English for Occupa-tional Purposes). Each of these major branches is then sub-divided according to the disciplines or occupations with which it is con-cerned. Thus, EAP may be separated into English for Biology, English for Mathematics, English for Economics, etc. and EOP branches out into English for Pilots, English for Doctors, English for Bank employees, etc. (Figure 1).

The distinction between the two major branches of ESP is not clear-cut, however. A lot of work conducted in the academy is in fact preparation for the professional occupations students are likely to go into when they graduate and might therefore be classified as EOP. If we take the example of English for Business in the university, aspects of the course designed to assist learners in their studies would clearly be EAP, but university business courses, like other vocationally-oriented courses, usually seek to prepare their students for business careers. English support for the more vocationally-oriented aspects of the Business course could perhaps be described as EOP as much as EAP. An English course designed to help students read economics