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052180518X - Research Perspectives on English for Academic Purposes

Edited by John Flowerdew and Matthew Peacock

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521801300

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First published 2001

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-80130-0 hardback
ISBN-10 0-521-80130-3 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-80518-6 paperback
ISBN-10 0-521-80518-X paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

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Series editors' preface

In the English-speaking world, and also in many parts of the non-English speaking world, English is the major language of higher education. Both in these contexts, as well as in countries where English has a different role, it also serves as the major world language for the dissemination of research in science, industry and technology. These facts have an enormous impact on the educational experiences of vast numbers of students around the world, for whom fluency in the norms of English-language academic discourse is essential for the successful negotiation of both the processes and products of learning. The educational response to this phenomenon in tertiary institutions around the world has been the development of the discipline of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), that branch of English for Specific Purposes that provides teaching and other forms of language support for ESOL students completing academic studies in English-medium institutions of learning.

EAP is a field of activity that draws on 30 years or more of practical experience. It encompasses all aspects of language teaching including language analysis, curriculum development, teaching methodology, materials development and assessment. However, as the field has developed it has moved from being a largely practical activity to one that has much broader dimensions. A substantial theoretical basis has developed around key issues in EAP, as well as an active research agenda, and both theory and research are now seen as essential to the practice of EAP.

This book differs from many others books on EAP in that it adopts a research perspective on issues in EAP. It seeks to provide a comprehensive survey of research issues, methods and findings, as well as pedagogical applications of such research within this important field of applied linguistics. Contributors describe the history of EAP research, the development of theoretical paradigms, current issues in EAP research, testing in EAP, cultural and ideological factors, and approaches to the teaching of EAP in curriculum

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development, materials design, and pedagogy. A variety of research methodologies are illustrated, including discourse analysis, ethnography, experimental research, survey research, and action research. The advantages and limitations of different research approaches are also examined. At the same time the papers in this important collection provide a basis for a critical re-examination of assumptions about the scope and nature of EAP as well as its recent and current practices.

The accessibility and comprehensiveness of this timely survey will make it an essential reference source for EAP practitioners, applied linguists, curriculum developers, teachers and researchers as well as others interested in the role of language in the transmission of academic and other forms of knowledge.

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Preface

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a truly international phenomenon, linked in with the overall trend towards the globalisation of information exchange, communication and education. English is now well established as the world language of research and publication and an ever-greater number of universities and institutes of learning are using English as the language of instruction. With this tremendous expansion, there has been a parallel growth in the preparation of non-native English speakers (NNSs) for study in English. This has taken place, and is continuing, in English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Australia, post-colonial territories such as South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Arabian Gulf States, and other countries where English has no official status, such as China, Japan, continental Europe and South America.

In recognition of this important development, it is time that serious attention was given to EAP in a scholarly work. The purpose of this book is to highlight the various key issues of the field and to demonstrate, through specially commissioned articles from leading scholars in the field, the scope, theoretical issues and pedagogical concerns of EAP. Individual contributions are original research articles, taking a broad definition of research to include philosophical enquiry and critical review. The majority of the chapters, however, contain empirical studies. Contributors have been chosen by reason of their track record in the EAP field, based on a literature review of the leading books and journals that deal with EAP. Given that one of the goals of the collection is highlighting the international nature of the EAP enterprise, scholars have been selected across a broad geographical spectrum, including North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, China (PRC), Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, the Indian sub-continent, Canada, New Zealand, Brunei, and South Africa.

The two parts of the book are *Issues in EAP* and *The EAP*

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Curriculum. Part I, *Issues in EAP*, is devoted to the more global, theoretical and practical problems with which researchers and practitioners are currently concerned. Part II, *The EAP Curriculum*, is more narrowly focused on the planning, implementation and evaluation of what goes on inside (as well as outside) the EAP classroom. These two areas overlap to some extent because the key issues, by virtue of the fact that they are issues, will be relevant to pedagogy and its planning, implementation and evaluation; at the same time, because of the fundamental relationship between EAP and pedagogy, some of the key issues derive directly from curriculum concerns. For example, needs analysis and methodology are intrinsic to any approach to the curriculum, but also figure greatly in the discussion of more global EAP issues. Where there has been doubt about where to locate an individual chapter we have applied the simple criterion of whether or not the issue is a key component of the curriculum – in which case we have placed it in the curriculum part – or can stand on its own as a research issue. In the case of assessment – which is, of course, a key curriculum component – we have two chapters: one is a case study of the historical development of an EAP placement test at one university; the other focuses on the more global issues relating to the major international tests, TOEFL and IELTS. The former paper is placed in the curriculum part, because it speaks most directly to curriculum planners and testers. The latter is in the issues part, because its ramifications are more wide-ranging and of international political significance.

It is envisaged that this book will be used as a set text for students on MA programmes in Applied Linguistics/TESL/ESP/EAP. As well as being used as a course book, this work is likely to appeal to the very large number of EAP practitioners working in institutions of higher education throughout the world. Finally, the book will appeal to university teacher educators and researchers in EAP.