What is EAP?

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) ‘is usually defined as teaching English with the aim of assisting learners’ study or research in that language’, but is also a ‘theoretically grounded and research informed enterprise’ (Hyland 2006: 1). Ideas about the nature of language, learning, and teaching all impact on the theory and practice of EAP (Basturkmen 2006). Hence, the roles and responsibilities of the EAP practitioner are manifold: ‘needs assessor, specialized syllabus designer, authentic materials developer, and content knowledgeable instructor, capable of coping with a revolving door of content areas relevant to learners’ communities’ (Belcher 2006: 139).

EAP instruction takes place with a range of learners, in a variety of contexts: (i) in higher education settings in English-speaking countries; (ii) in settings where English has official status and is used as a medium of instruction; (iii) in settings where certain school/university subjects are wholly or partly taught in English (e.g. medicine); and (iv) in settings where all tertiary education is taught in the L1, but English is recognized as an important additional language for study, and where certain learning materials and texts can only be found in English (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998: 35). Although EAP is traditionally associated exclusively with tertiary education, this perception is being eroded, with a recent special issue of Journal of English for Academic Purposes devoted to EAP in secondary education (see Johns and Snow 2006). EAP should not be exclusively associated with the non-native speaker of English either: the increasingly diverse student population means that some native speakers will lack the necessary academic communication skills (Hyland 2006).

EAP, together with English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Depending on the type of academic subject matter, EAP can be further divided into more specific sub-types, e.g. English for Medicine or English for Engineering. However, as Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) argue, the distinction between EAP and EOP is not always straightforward as many aspects of EAP are aimed at preparing students for their future careers in their disciplines. For instance, an English for Engineering course will typically cover both skills necessary for academic study (EAP), such as reading engineering textbooks and writing assignments, but also skills for engineers, such as writing technical reports, which can be classified as EOP. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001: 12) suggest that EAP should be
subdivided into ‘EAP designed to help students with their studies and EAP directed towards professional preparation’. While both EAP and EOP are carried out at the university, their goals are different in orientation in that the former is purely academic while the latter has a vocational dimension.

**History of EAP**

The origins of EAP can be traced back to the 1960s, when a growing interest in language as a means of communication, language variability in context and functions of specialized languages prepared the ground for the emergence of EAP (Flowerdew and Peacock 2001). However, equally important were various non-linguistic factors that led to the need for EAP, such as the rise of English as a global language.

**Stages in the development of EAP**

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), the development of ESP (which includes EAP) can be divided into four stages: (i) register analysis, (ii) rhetorical and discourse analysis, (iii) study skills, and (iv) needs analysis. It is, of course, overly simplistic to see these stages as discrete; they overlap and elements of each stage continue to influence thinking in the field today, albeit to a greater or lesser extent.

**Register analysis**

The primary goal of register analysis was to identify the grammatical and lexical features occurring more frequently in scientific English than in general English; hence the term ‘lexicostatistics’ (Swales 1988). The assumption was that this information could then serve as a basis for syllabus and textbook design. Indeed, some of the first EAP textbooks were developed on the basis of the findings of register analysis (see Swales 1988, and Dudley-Evans and St John 1998 for more detail). However, it was realized that teaching the grammatical and lexical items found to be highly frequent in scientific English did not necessarily make learners successful users of scientific English. Seminal work from this period, together with a helpful commentary, can be found in Swales (1988). The more recent developments of academic corpora and sophisticated computer-based methods of analysis have renewed the interest in registers, as discussed in the section on corpora below.

**Rhetorical and discourse analysis**

The early 1970s brought a growing realization that linguistic analysis needed to take into account patterns above the sentence or utterance level (Swales 1988). Studies from this period focus on textual structure, discourse patterns and rhetorical functions of scientific discourse with the aim of providing practitioners with information on authentic language use in whole texts (Hutchinson and Waters 1987). Textbooks based on this work feature material on functions of scientific discourse, such as description and classification (e.g. Jordan 1990).

**Study skills**

In line with the focus on communicative skills in general ELT in the late 1970s, greater importance was given to the skills the learner needed in order to function effectively in
academic environments. A typical project exemplifying the type of EAP work in this period is the University of Malaya ESP Project. Having identified reading skills as the most relevant to students studying in Malay but using literature in English, project participants developed a series of teaching materials specifically addressing various sub-skills needed for efficient reading of academic texts (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998; Swales 1988).

Needs analysis

EAP instruction is concerned with preparing students to work effectively within their academic environment. Given the diversity of the profile of EAP students and their learning situations, and due also to the limited duration of EAP courses, needs analysis is seen as the ‘cornerstone’ of EAP, since it helps determine ‘the what and how of a course’ (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998: 121). Although needs analysis had played a role in ESP from the 1960s, it was in the late 1970s and early 1980s that it became one of its central concepts. The publication of Munby’s (1978) volume gave an impetus to the debate about different types of needs and procedures to establish them. The rise of needs analysis can be seen as a reaction against an exclusive focus on descriptions of language use in target situations of earlier periods, and a shift towards considering the learner as the centre of the teaching/learning process (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998). West (1994) offers a comprehensive survey of early work in needs analysis. As one of the major pillars of ESP, needs analysis continues to attract scholars’ attention, as will be discussed in more detail in the third section below.

EAP today

All of the stages described above continue to influence contemporary approaches to EAP, as is apparent from contributions to the journals in the field: English for Specific Purposes and Journal of English for Academic Purposes. In the sections that follow, we identify salient topical issues and areas of research. Current debates are set against a backdrop of unprecedented growth in EAP across the globe in response to the increasing numbers of international students at universities in English-speaking countries, and the establishment of programmes taught in the medium of English in non-English speaking countries worldwide (see, for instance, Coleman 2006). That EAP is now a truly global field can be seen from the many national and international publications and conferences on EAP, and the establishment of EAP research groups worldwide (e.g. the City University of Hong Kong, CERLIS in Italy, KIAP in Norway, GRAPE and INTERLAE in Spain, and the University of Michigan’s English Language Institute in the United States).

Current issues in EAP

General vs specific EAP

Blue (1988) distinguished between English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), EGAP being academic English skills, language, and activities relevant for students studying in any field, and ESAP being relevant for students in certain fields only. For instance, instruction in how to compile bibliographies, take notes, and listen to lectures could be covered in an EGAP syllabus, while ESAP would focus on discipline-specific requirements, such as writing a chemistry lab report.
An important debate is how general or specific EAP pedagogy should be, Spack (1988) being an advocate of EGAP, and Hyland (2002) of ESAP where possible. Arguments can be put forward in favour of both approaches, and in favour of a judicious general-specific combined approach. EGAP may appeal where student populations and fields of study are diverse, and where EAP teachers have little time or resources to design subject-specific programmes, since the challenges of researching, designing, and implementing as many appropriate programmes as are needed can be formidable (see Basturkmen 2003; Belcher 2006; Hyland 2006 for further discussion). Furthermore, in many contexts communication/cooperation between EAP teachers and content lecturers may be poor, thus preventing teachers from learning what is required of students entering various departments across their university. EGAP is also more economical, with one class for all, rather than several discipline-specific ESAP classes. On the other hand, as we shall see below, much recent EAP research has revealed that academic discourse varies from discipline to discipline, making a case for teaching students in discipline-specific classes. In addition, learners may find an ESAP class more relevant and motivating, because it directly relates to their field of study.

In reality, decisions about specificity are often constrained by national or institutional bodies, which do not always take as much account of research findings in the field as they should. In addition, these bodies may prescribe an EGAP approach when EAP teachers know very little about content lecturers’ demands, but, as Basturkmen (2003) argues, in order to make such a course truly relevant for students’ needs, research to identify generic and transferable academic skills relevant to all will still be required.

**Cooperation between EAP teachers and subject teachers**

We have seen in the discussion about EGAP and ESAP above that cooperation between EAP and subject teachers is an important issue. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) talk of three levels of cooperation between the EAP teacher and subject teachers, each with an increasing level of interaction: cooperation, collaboration and team teaching. Cooperation involves information gathering from the subject department about tasks, syllabi, and other information useful for EAP course design. Collaboration involves the EAP teacher and the subject teacher working together in order to develop the EAP course in support of the subject course. Team teaching involves the two parties teaching together in the classroom. Those studies conducted to date (e.g. Barron 2002; Dudley-Evans 2001) reveal that factors impacting on the level of cooperation include the institutional context, differences in teaching methodologies and philosophies, the low status of the EAP teacher in some contexts, and related issues of power.

**Needs analysis and rights analysis**

Needs analysis ‘underlies syllabus design, materials development, text selection, learning goals and tasks, and, ultimately, evaluation of students and course or program success’ (Carkin 2005: 87). However, the meaning of ‘needs’ has been much debated (see Belcher 2006; Hutchinson and Waters 1987; Long 2005; West 1994), and there is much discussion about whose needs EAP teachers should take into account and the instruments teachers should use to conduct needs analyses (e.g. Jordan [1997] lists 14 different methods). Whereas it was the language ‘expert’ who traditionally identified needs (see Munby 1978), more recent approaches have recommended that a number of parties should have a say, including teachers, education authorities, and other stakeholders (e.g. parents, sponsors), as well as the learners themselves. In Hyland’s (2006: 73) words, needs analysis must recognize ‘learners’ goals and backgrounds,
their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in’. Hence Benesch (2001) prefers to speak of rights analysis rather than needs analysis, emphasizing the importance of giving the learners a say about what they are taught. For a summary of recent criticisms of needs analysis, see Basturkmen (2006: 19–20).

**Critical EAP**

Drawing on the teachings of Paulo Freire and writings on critical pedagogy in the education literature (e.g. Giroux 1988), the critical EAP movement is concerned with social justice, change, and empowerment of the EAP learner, who may feel the requirements of content lecturers are unclear – or unfair. It is concerned with critiquing existing educational institutions and practices, and subsequently transforming both education and society (Hall 2000: 3, emphasis in original. See also Benesch 2001; Canagarajah 2002b; Pennycook 1999). Since critical pedagogy is sometimes associated with political activism, some teachers (and learners) may feel such a pedagogy has little relevance to the EAP classroom (cf. Johns 1993; Johnston 1999). One powerful criticism that has been levelled at critical EAP is its tendency to theorize, rather than to offer implementable classroom activities (Johnston 1999). However, Benesch (2001) has offered both theory and practice, describing how critical EAP can provide students with strategies for challenging the way things are’, as well as describing critical teaching activities and materials.

Both Benesch (2001) and Hyland (2006) point out that there are many types of critical EAP, with some types being less concerned with (political) transformation than others (cf. Allison 1996; and Harwood and Hadley 2004, who distinguish between ‘pragmatic’ and ‘critical’ approaches to EAP). So, as Benesch (2001) notes, critical EAP is nothing if not locally appropriate, addressing the learners’ concerns in any given class.

**Genre analysis**

The concept of ‘genre’ is much discussed (see Johns 2008; Swales 1990, 2004). Hyland (2004: 4) offers the following accessible definition: ‘Genre is a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations’. Genres are characterized by their communicative purposes as well as by their patterns of structure, style, content and intended audience (Swales 1990: 58). John Swales’ move analysis (e.g. 1981, 1990, 2004) is a particularly influential type of genre analysis, with ‘move’ referring to a section of the text which is seen to perform a specific communicative function. Swales famously demonstrated how writers of research articles can use their introductions to create a research space, identifying a gap in research community knowledge which they proceed to fill. A wide range of academic spoken and written genres has been investigated using move analysis. Some researchers have analyzed research articles in their entirety in a range of disciplines, including biochemistry (Kanoksilapatham 2007) and medicine (Nwogu 1997). Others have focused on specific parts of the research article, such as introductions (Samraj 2002a) and conclusions (Yang and Allison 2003). Still others have focused on other genres, such as the Ph.D. thesis (e.g. Bunton 2005).

As Johns *et al.* (2006) point out, however, a study of genre involves more than the words of the speaker or writer, encompassing ‘the complexities of texts, contexts, writers and their purposes, and all that is beyond a text that influences writers and audiences’ (2006: 247). Hence so-called ethnographic genre analyses have supplemented textual analysis with interviews with writers and speakers (and their audiences) and a wider investigation into the context in which
the texts under study are produced. One such ethnographic genre analysis was conducted by Samraj (2002b), who found that the ‘contextual layers’ in which the writing/speaking is produced, such as the given course, task, and field of study, can impact on the genre’s form.

**Contrastive rhetoric**

The field of contrastive rhetoric is over forty years old, and has grown in sophistication (see Connor 2002), telling us much about the differences in comparable texts across languages and cultures. Some studies compare non-native writing and speaking with comparable outputs by native authors, while others compare equivalent genres written in different languages. Although our focus in this chapter is on English academic discourse rather than equivalents in other languages, comparisons of an equivalent genre across languages may well enhance understandings of what the English language version requires. For instance, in a comparison of economics papers written in English by Finnish and Anglo-American academics, Mauranen (1993) found that English writers used more text-organizational devices (e.g. ‘however’). She argues that this finding reveals differences in the two writing cultures, with English being more reader-oriented, i.e. more concerned with guiding the reader through text, and Finnish being more writer-oriented and implicit. She also notes the impact of educational factors, i.e. the differences in the writing instruction in the two writing cultures. While English writing manuals encourage the use of text-organizational devices, Finnish manuals advise writers against using such ‘unnecessary’ words. Additional contrastive studies of written genres include Martín-Martín and Burgess (2004) and Sanderson (2008) on the research article, Feng (2008) on grant proposals and Salager-Meyer *et al.* (2007) on academic book reviews. There have also been a few contrastive studies of spoken genres, including Schleef (2009), who compared German and American lectures and seminars across different disciplines.

**Corpora and EAP**

Computer corpora, that is, electronically stored databases of authentic spoken and/or written text (see Sinclair 2004), have led to important insights about the linguistic and rhetorical features of EAP spoken and written genres. By examining large amounts of academic speech and writing, corpus studies enable us to take ‘an evidence-based approach’ (Hyland 2006: 58) to EAP. Corpora provide the student and teacher of EAP with many different insights, including information about how frequent any given words/ phrases are; the lexico-grammatical patterns which surround these words/ phrases; and the text’s keywords, i.e. those which are unusually frequent. Spoken and written academic discourse, and different spoken and written academic genres, can then be compared. As Hyland (2006) argues, perhaps the most noteworthy impact of corpora as far as EAP is concerned is the highlighting of the variation across different genres and disciplines, as we shall see below. There is a growing number of spoken and written corpora of academic English available, such as the British Academic Written English corpus (BAWE), the British Academic Spoken corpus (BASE), and the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE).

**Inter-disciplinary differences**

Corpora reveal much about how academic writing differs across the disciplines. For instance, Hyland (2000) analyzed expressions of praise and criticism in 160 book reviews from eight different disciplines. He found that book reviews in the sciences, such as engineering, contain
more instances of praise than criticism, while those in the social sciences, such as sociology, tend to be more critical. Many corpus-based studies have focused on specific linguistic features, such as the function and frequency of imperatives (Swales et al. 1998).

There have also been studies of spoken academic language which highlight disciplinary differences, such as Simpson-Vlach’s (2006) research on linguistic items in MICASE. Inter-disciplinary differences in spoken academic discourse have been investigated in lectures, with Thompson (2006) contrasting the language of lectures in the disciplines of economics and philosophy in the BASE corpus.

Intra-disciplinary differences

A less studied aspect of EAP focuses on how speech and writing can differ in the same discipline, although evidence of variations in generic structure within a discipline was noted as early as Swales (1981). Harwood (2006) found striking differences in the frequency of personal pronouns in political scientists’ journal articles and he therefore interviewed the writers in an attempt to account for these discrepancies. The interviewees’ different beliefs about (in)appropriate pronoun use can partly be explained by looking at the type of research they carry out, i.e. qualitative versus quantitative. Another recent study of intra-disciplinary differences is Ozturk (2007), which reports variations in the structure of research article introductions within applied linguistics.

Studies of academic speech and writing

A number of corpus studies have compared and contrasted linguistic features in academic speech and writing, notably the work done by Douglas Biber and colleagues (e.g. Biber 2006). Biber’s multi-dimensional analysis methodology involves quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing large corpora of texts and identifying and describing a range of linguistic features contained in these texts. It shows how markedly speech and writing in general, and university language in particular, varies across registers.

Other studies contrasting academic speech and writing include Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet (2008), who have shown that the functions and frequencies of if-conditionals vary across written and spoken academic genres. This study compares if-conditionals in a corpus of three genres in the discipline of medicine: research articles, conference presentations, and editorials, with if-conditionals occurring almost four times as often in conference presentations as in research articles.

Learner corpora

Learner corpora, that is, collections of speech and writing by learners of English, are particularly useful for EAP (see Granger 2002). A number of studies have compared corpora of native and non-native student writing, noting differences in the frequency of certain linguistic features (e.g. Ädel 2008; Granger 1998; Hinkel 2002), thereby identifying language that the learners in question use significantly more or less often than native speaker counterparts, or misuse. A good example of a learner corpus study is Hyland and Milton’s (1997) study of native and non-native students’ use of epistemic modal language, which showed that the non-native writers relied on a more restricted set of items than their native speaker counterparts. There are also striking differences in the frequency of certain items: appear, for instance, is found thirty-three times more often in the native writers’ corpus.
Corpora and EAP textbooks and teaching materials

Corpora have also been useful for identifying discrepancies between academic discourse and its representation in EAP textbooks (see Harwood 2005; Paltridge 2002). For instance, several studies which focus on modal verbs conclude that EAP textbooks and style guides are not only failing to teach the full repertoire of modal language, they are also failing to teach a number of items that learners would find most useful (Holmes 1988; Hyland 1994; Römer 2004). The textbooks are also providing misleading explanations for some of the language they do teach. However, some EAP textbook writers are now exploiting both spoken and written corpus data in their instructional materials (e.g. Feak et al. 2009; Swales and Feak 2000; and see Harwood 2010). Another encouraging development has seen teachers and researchers getting EAP learners themselves to consult corpora (Gavioli 2005; Lee and Swales 2006).

Academic vocabulary

Academic vocabulary is defined as words frequently occurring in academic but not other kinds of texts, words such as ‘subsequent’ or ‘component’ (Coxhead and Nation 2001). The most well-known list of academic vocabulary is the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead 2000), which is based on an analysis of a 3,500,000-word corpus of academic English, consisting of a variety of academic texts covering arts, science, law and commerce. Knowing which words occur frequently in academic texts is very useful for EAP course and materials designers, as it enables them to prioritize lexical items to be taught, especially in contexts where general EAP classes are held for students from a variety of disciplines. Indeed, vocabulary teaching materials have been developed on the basis of the AWL (e.g. Schmitt and Schmitt 2005).

However, the AWL has recently been criticized by Durrant (2009) and Hyland and Tse (2007), who show that academic vocabulary varies across disciplines. It is timely, therefore, that researchers have started developing discipline-specific wordlists in a variety of fields and sub-fields, such as engineering (Mudraya 2006) and medicine (Wang et al. 2008). However, at this stage, there is still much work to be done on pedagogical applications of these findings.

Lexical bundles

There has been much research focused on identifying and analyzing recurrent linguistic items which feature in academic speech and writing, with various labels used to describe this phenomenon, such as ‘lexical bundles’ (Biber et al. 2004; Hyland 2008). Cortes (e.g. 2004) defines lexical bundles as sequences of three or more words that frequently occur in a particular register, such as is likely to and these results suggest that, both of which feature in academic writing. Cortes and Hyland have found important differences in how lexical bundles are used across disciplines and by student and expert writers. Focusing on writing in history and biology, Cortes (2004) demonstrates that biologists use a wider variety of bundles than historians, and that many of the bundles used frequently by academics are seldom used by students in the same fields. Another noteworthy study of lexical bundles in writing is Hyland (2008), while Nesi and Basturkmen (2006) have also studied lexical bundles, but in lectures, as opposed to writing.

Li and Schmitt’s (2009) study of lexical bundles is particularly relevant to EAP teachers, since the focus is on acquisition rather than description. Li and Schmitt chart a Chinese M.A. student’s use of written bundles over a year. Textual analysis of the student’s phrases is complemented by interviews to investigate how the phrases were learned. Longitudinal
studies of acquisition of salient language for EAP should prove useful in informing teachers and materials writers how much can be learned (and how), as will Jones and Haywood’s (2004) account of promoting and assessing the effectiveness of the teaching of lexical bundles.

Academic lectures

Some of the research on lectures focuses on the language used (e.g. Lindemann and Mauranen 2001; Simpson-Vlach 2006). For instance, Crawford Camiciottoli (2007) identifies a wide range of discourse structuring expressions used by lecturers (e.g. What I’m going to talk about today; We’ll come back to that later), and rightly argues that this type of research should enable EAP materials writers to better prepare learners for lectures by developing more authentic classroom activities to simulate lecture discourse. Thompson’s study (2003) is notable because it focuses not only on organizational patterns in lectures, but also on lecturers’ intonation. Thompson also contrasts her findings with information given on lecture organizational patterns and intonation in EAP textbooks, showing that the textbook material is potentially misleading. Other studies try to determine salient linguistic features of lectures that aid or hinder non-native understanding (e.g. Chaudron and Richards 1986; Flowerdew and Tauroza 1995). For instance, Jung (2006) focuses on contextualization markers which ‘signal how learners should interpret the incoming information’ (2006: 1929), showing that when these markers are absent, L2 learners more frequently misunderstand what is said. Other studies adopt a psycholinguistic perspective, attempting to assess the impact of working memory on non-natives’ note-taking (e.g. Faraco et al. 2002).

Writing for international publication

Much of the work discussed above concerns university students and student genres, such as lectures and essays set by lecturers for assessment. However, another current area of EAP research concerns the dominant position of English in international scholarship and increasing pressure on scholars worldwide to publish in English. This has led to a growing body of research on writing for international publication in English (for a review of this work, see Uzuner 2008). Major themes in this literature include the difficulties multilingual scholars experience when writing for international publication and the strategies they employ to overcome them (Belcher 2007; Burrough-Boenisch 2003; Canagarajah 2002a, 2002b; Flowerdew 2001; Li and Flowerdew 2007; Lillis and Curry 2006).

Future directions for EAP research

We now identify several areas where further research is needed to enhance the knowledge base of EAP.

The efficacy of EAP

Master (2005) points to the lack of well-designed empirical research focused on the efficacy of EAP instruction: does EAP work? If there are two EAP programmes running, which leads to the better learning outcomes? Some of the work in this area includes Storch and Tapper (2009), a study of the impact of a postgraduate EAP writing course in Australia, and Robinson et al.’s (2001) experimental study of the effectiveness of teaching oral discussion skills using
three different methods, one of a few studies which compare and contrast different pedagogical approaches to EAP.

**EAP teacher training**

In some parts of the world, institutions ask ELT teachers to teach EAP without providing specialized training. A discussion of the nature of such training has largely been neglected to date. Notable exceptions include a volume on teacher training for teaching languages for specific purposes (Howard and Brown 1997) and articles by Boswood and Marriott (1994), who describe an ESP teacher training course for experienced ELT teachers, Jackson (1998), who argues for the use of case studies in ESP teacher training, and Chen (2000), who reports on self-training through action research.

**EAP, second language acquisition, and teaching materials**

Basturkmen (2006) comments, ‘ESP has not been much concerned with the debates and issues emerging in recent years in the field of second language acquisition’ (2006: 5). Hence, as Hyland (2006) argues, ‘Many EAP courses still lack a theoretical or research rationale and textbooks continue too often to depend on the writer’s experience and intuition rather than on systematic research’ (2006: 5). Basturkmen (2006) makes a step in this direction by exploring the links between EAP and SLA theories of language learning, such as information processing.

**Ethnographies, academic literacies, and deeper understandings of EAP contexts**

A case can be made for the need for EAP research to focus more heavily on ‘processes and contexts’ (Belcher 2006). The focus has often been on textual description, given the ‘time sensitive nature of most ESP needs analysis, curriculum development, and the very real-world needs of learners’, all of which has meant ‘the more time-consuming investigations of processes and contexts’ may have been somewhat neglected (2006: 149). However, there have been a number of landmark qualitative case studies documenting both native and non-native students’ difficulties, particularly with writing, in university contexts (e.g. Casanave 2002; Leki 2007; Spack 1997). A related body of literature has focused on the process of academic enculturation (e.g. Casanave and Li 2008; Prior 1998). Another group of researchers associated with (critical) ethnographic research is ‘academic literacies’ scholars, who seek to ‘go beyond texts’, in Connor’s (2004) words, and to gain insights into the contexts in which texts are produced and the actors who produce them, rather than limiting themselves to textual analysis (see Lillis and Scott 2007 for a survey of work conducted to date in this field).

**Descriptions of language use**

It will be apparent from this review that more work has been carried out on written than spoken academic discourse to date. New recording technologies and advances in corpus linguistics will enable more sophisticated analyses of spoken genres. One potentially exciting area is multimodal analysis, providing insights into sound and image, as well as text (see Kress 2010). One area where applications of multimodal analysis may be useful is the analysis of university lectures, which increasingly combine lecturer talk with textual, audio and visual material projected on the screen. Multimodal analysis of Web-mediated communication, common in today’s workplaces, may also be of relevance to EAP.
EAP in dialogue with other fields

Many salient issues for EAP teachers and researchers are also of interest to scholars in other fields such as education and sociology, and EAP could benefit from adopting and adapting knowledge from a wider disciplinary base. For instance, there has been much interest in citation in academic writing by EAP researchers, but also by information scientists and sociologists of knowledge. Recent work (Harwood 2009; Hyland 2003; Petrić 2007) has drawn on all three areas, and a similar multidisciplinary approach could be usefully applied in EAP more generally.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the field of English for Academic Purposes. We began by defining EAP before providing an overview of its history and focussing on a number of pertinent current issues, including how specific EAP should be, whether and to what extent EAP and subject teachers should collaborate, different approaches to needs analysis, and how the developments in genre analysis, contrastive rhetoric and corpus-based work inform EAP pedagogy. The diversity of the directions for future research that we identify reflects the vibrancy of the field.

Related topics

corpus linguistics; ESP and business communication; lexis

Further reading

Basturkmen, H. (2007) Ideas and Options in English for Specific Purposes, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (This book explores the theories about language, learning and teaching in ESP, discussing major issues from the perspectives of theoretical background, recent research and practical applications, which is followed by questions and ideas for projects and suggestions for further reading.)

Dudley-Evans, T. and St John, M.-J. (1998) Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (This practical book provides a good introductory survey of major issues in ESP, including a separate chapter on EAP, with numerous illustrative examples, tasks for discussion and analysis, excerpts from textbooks, tests and other materials, an answer key for self-study purposes, and suggested readings for each chapter.)


Hyland, K. (2006) English for Academic Purposes: An Advanced Resource Book, Abingdon: Routledge. (This useful resource book contains twelve units on salient issues in EAP today, each with excerpts from research articles and discussion and research tasks, as well as a useful glossary and suggestions for further reading for each topic.)


References


