



*Exploring Options in Academic Writing:
Effective Vocabulary and Grammar Use*

Jan Frodesen and Margi Wald

Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.

MEGAN M. SICZEK

The George Washington University

Jan Frodesen and Margi Wald's book *Exploring Options in Academic Writing: Effective Vocabulary and Grammar Use* systematically presents what I have been pulling together ad hoc through many years of teaching writing in a university English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context: drawing on authentic examples of language in use to advance students' understanding of—and control over—academic text construction, serving our overall pedagogical goal of making students better and more self-sufficient academic writers.

Some of my best instructional successes have been the result of a structured approach to teaching the lexicogrammatical features of academic writing, where students themselves learn to recognize, analyze, and ideally generate clear academic written text. To accomplish this, however, I often have to create my own materials because existing texts tend to offer a decontextualized treatment of grammar or vocabulary development, which creates, for both instructors and students, a false impression that these are discrete aspects of language learning. A similar issue arises when grammar, mechanics, and punctuation are addressed in one text and vocabulary in another. Frodesen and Wald's book comprehensively unites these key aspects of academic language use to promote both student understanding and skill development.

The book opens with a description of its learning objectives and organization, highlighting the book's focus on the role student writers' lexicogrammatical decisions can play in "shaping, connecting, and restructuring their ideas" (p. x). Chapter 1 offers students background on the book's key premise: recognizing the difference between receptive and productive use of language and drawing on corpus-based resources to develop a set of tools to understand language use in context. The rest of the book is organized into three main sections: (a) showing relationships within sentences; (b) connecting and focusing across

sentences; and (c) qualifying ideas and reporting research, each divided into its own chapters that focus on representative target structures.

Each chapter begins with a short task that raises students' awareness of the target language structure, often preceded by a brief paragraph that shows students the significance of each structure within the rhetorical context for writing. Chapter 4, for example, introduces the frequency of cause/effect reasoning in academic writing and provides students with a series of sample sentences that isolate the connectors used to establish causal relationships. Once students are primed to "notice" the target structure, they are better prepared for the series of exercises that follow in each chapter. These exercises represent varying formats and levels of complexity, offering students guided practice in short meaningful chunks. For example, some of these exercises involve the recognition or analysis of target structures in context while others challenge students to manipulate grammar and language to convey an idea clearly.

Using different formats for the chapter exercises not only reduces monotony and adds variation but also builds students' flexibility in their use of target language structures. For example, Chapter 7 focuses on creating cohesion across sentences and provides examples and exercises that allow students to develop coherence by varying word forms and using reference forms. At the same time, the chapter emphasizes a grammatical focus on checking verb agreement with long subject phrases and using the passive voice. This is a perfect example of the book's focus on the "interaction of vocabulary and grammar" (p. x). Similarly, the book's approach to contextualized vocabulary development not only promotes an increased lexical repertoire but also teaches students to think about patterns of use, such as collocations.

Though Frodesen and Wald's book draws on authentic lexicogrammatical content, which is a strength, another attribute of the text is that its content is not tied to a particular topic or theme. This makes it easy to slot this book into any writing-intensive class, regardless of its thematic or disciplinary focus. In fact, the lexicogrammatical structures the book focuses on have relevance across myriad curricular settings, from EAP and undergraduate writing across the curriculum to graduate writing in more specialized disciplinary contexts.

One challenge in working with this text might be figuring out how to maximize its use within a particular teaching context. This book could certainly be used as the main instructional material of a course that aims to develop students' lexicogrammatical fluency and accuracy, but if used as part of a larger course with a more comprehensive set of learning outcomes, instructors would need to think carefully about how to blend it with existing instructional materials.

For example, though the focus on certain target structures may appear narrow—such as an entire chapter targeting writing about increases and decreases—it is important to examine the larger arrangement of the book to recognize how all of the structures emphasized cohere. Successful academic writing goes beyond accurate use of individual language structures; it involves a range of choices writers must make to link ideas both within and across sentences, to report on information from sources, and to indicate their level of certainty about the claims they make.

Exploring Options in Academic Writing: Effective Vocabulary and Grammar Use could be used as a main or supplemental text in any academic writing class and would also be suitable for students' self-study. Not only is it empirically grounded in research on authentic language use in context, but it was obviously written by practicing teachers who are intimately acquainted with the needs of second language writers who are in the process of acquiring academic discourse, as well as with gaps in the current textbook market.

International Perspectives on English Language Teacher Education: Innovations From the Field

Thomas S. C. Farrell (Ed.)

New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

GINA COVERT BENAVIDEZ

University of Georgia, Athens

Within the evolving field of second language teacher education (SLTE), the desired outcome of teacher-preparation programs is the ability to develop emerging educators prepared to face the reality of the 21st-century language classroom. However, there is typically a dissonance between the academically focused educational theory programs that prepare new teachers and what these teachers encounter once they enter the classroom and attempt to apply this pedagogy.

In *International Perspectives on English Language Teacher Education: Innovations from the Field*, editor Thomas Farrell incorporates a rich variety of international pioneering SLTE programs that strive to eliminate this disconnect and provide authenticity for preservice teachers. Farrell argues that a key element of this preparation should incorporate reflection through the transition period from student to teacher, a period he terms as *novice-service language teacher education*. The inclusion of programs with both teacher-preparation pedagogy and focused support on the first year(s) of teaching with an em-

phasis on the reflection process provides the framework for this book.

Through 10 global case studies of teacher-preparation programs, inventive methods of teacher training are explored and evaluated in terms of their potential for educators to learn about new strategies within this novice-service model. New ways of bridging the gap during the transition from student to teacher while emphasizing the importance of self-evaluation and reflection are brought forth in these programs. For example, Simon Phipps discusses his implementation of constructivist language theory into a combined MA/DELTA program for language-teacher education after noticing that the heavily theory-based MA program was not allowing students enough authentic experience in the classroom. Similarly, Thomas Farrell introduces a teacher-education course from a Canadian university emphasizing the sociolinguistic context in second language teaching. Both programs stress the value of reflection while learning theory, allowing students to consider how theory will affect their future thinking and teaching.

John Macalister and Jill Musgrave in New Zealand introduce a valuable system of teacher training by incorporating real situations written up by graduates in their TESOL program about the challenges they faced in their first experiences in the classrooms. The program's students use these scenarios in their course work to address gaps between pedagogy and practice and come up with strategies for encountering such situations. Another example of this nature comes from the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, where Jack C. Richards addresses the importance of teachers' engaging in materials-development course work in order to cultivate a deeper understanding of how to adapt or design materials to better suit their students, in anticipation of the lack of culturally specific local materials in some areas of Southeast Asia.

The next section, co-written by Margo DelliCarpini and Orlando B. Alonso from the US, places emphasis on two-way content-based instruction for both ELL and content teachers in order to develop better understandings of the respective subject matter and provide deeper support for all students. The authors found that teachers of ELL and teachers of content subjects were frustrated when the two groups had to work together in the supported classroom. The program advocates for student teachers to take courses on teaching the "opposite" field so that there would be a mutual understanding of each other's fields while working together to best help the students.

Other unique responses to demographic and regional issues are addressed directly in SLTE programs to train preservice teachers with the skills necessary to enter local classrooms. From a teacher-preparation program in South Africa, a country with 11 national languages,

Leketi Makalela introduces translanguaging as an English language-teaching methodology to encourage biliteracy among preservice student teachers. Lubna Alsagoff discusses the unique issues of preparing ESOL teachers to instruct in formal English instead of Singlish, the widely accepted Singaporean informal English dialect.

The theme of communication is persistent throughout these chapters. Helen Donaghue emphasizes the importance of collaboration and dialogue while discovering how to implement new technology for the modern language-learning classroom, from both the teaching and the supervision of teaching perspectives in the United Arab Emirates. From the UK, Steve Mann advocates the use of spoken feedback using a screen-capture program called Jing in a graduate-level language teaching and linguistics program in order to improve engagement and quality of responses. In the final case study, Hao Xu reports from China about an innovative in-service program that focuses on first-year language teachers and their use of lesson study activities in order to provide continued support and collaboration by constantly revisiting strategies of lesson planning as these teachers progress through their first year.

Farrell concludes by calling attention to how these global perspectives emphasize the importance of reflection in the teacher-preparation process. Helping student teachers become thinking teachers who delve into self-inquiries about individual context and narrative to better understand perspectives of their students are the goals of these programs. He encourages further inventive and explorative methods to develop these skills in teacher-education programs around the world, inspiring all involved in the field of second language teaching.

The organization and structure of the book combined with the readability and captivating chapter contents are some initial strengths of *International Perspectives*. The cross-cultural material adds depth and interest to the case studies. Furthermore, the potential for language educators to garner a multitude of examples to put theory into practice is the most valuable takeaway. A possible limitation is that some chapters will be more suited for educators involved with administration or curriculum design while others may be more directed toward instructors or students.

As someone who has taught English as a second or other language both in the US and internationally, I appreciate the global perspectives and the new ideas for teacher training Farrell provides in these studies. *International Perspectives* provides much thoughtful and interesting content that I encourage language teachers, curriculum developers, and administrators in the field of teaching English as a second or other language to consider learning from.

***Research Methods for Language Teaching:
Inquiry, Process, and Synthesis***

Netta Avineri

London, England: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017.

SAMAH ELBELAZI

Stanford University

LAMA ALHARBI

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Conducting classroom-based research has always been an aim for many educators, especially scholar-teachers. Connecting classroom practices with research tools, *Research Methods for Language Teaching: Inquiry, Process, and Synthesis*, by Netta Avineri, provides language teachers with a vivid outline for an easily adoptable research process. Providing introductory information about education research, this book is highly geared to graduate students in their initial stages of study, rather than to students at the dissertation stage. The book assists in setting a clear research plan with details for each research stage.

The book is divided into four main sections, each thoroughly discussing the stages of the research process: Inquiry, Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Bring It All Together. Whether these stages are followed in order or by reader's preference, many are recursive throughout the research process. All sections have reflective and activity thinking "boxes" that make the book engaging to readers. These "boxes" include perfect classroom activities, homework, and research logs for graduate students. All chapters start with guiding questions setting the tone of the chapter and end with suggested major readings with annotations.

Inquiry, the first section, includes four chapters that explain the stages of the research process. Uniquely, it explores how to draw on ACE (applicable, collaborative, and empowering) the research process. This chapter explains the importance of time management and writing process while conducting a study. Additionally, it provides an overview of various research paradigms and how they are affected by the researcher's methodological choices.

The second chapter focuses on the importance of the literature review for any given research. It provides a clear agenda that starts with reading and ends with an argument. The literature review is presented as a vital part of the research, not only to find a gap in the research but to construct an argument in relation to other research in the field. The third chapter delivers an excellent explanation of the formation of research questions with examples of deductive and inductive ap-

proaches. The author stresses the importance of understanding the implications of one's research questions for a language classroom. The purpose, Avineri notes, is to see how findings shape classroom practices and pedagogical ideologies. The chapter elucidates fully how the deductive and inductive approaches influence and leverage the research design and the researcher's choice of data-collection methods. Last, the author discusses ethical considerations in research and the IRB process. This chapter helps guide teacher researchers in defining their roles and responsibilities at the professional and institutional level.

In the second section, Data Collection, The fifth chapter presents a detailed discussion on the affordance of questionnaire design from macro (organization) to micro (word-choice) level. Avineri provides examples of effective questions for researchers to consider while designing their research. The chapter discusses key issues in questionnaire design such as: What do you want to measure? It provides introductory examples of questionnaire platforms such as Google forms and SurveyMonkey. While this chapter focuses on quantitative methods, Chapter 6 examines interviews and teachers' journals as effective qualitative-research methods.

Extending the qualitative-methods approaches, Chapter 7 explores case studies in applied linguistics, "in which linguistic and cultural learning [are] intertwined" (p. 121). Avineri provides examples from ethnography, field notes, collecting artifacts, mapping, and audio recording, among other methods. Researcher positionality and how researchers could connect their data to their research agenda is explicitly addressed by the author. In the final chapter of this section, the author introduces various methods of data transcription.

Chapter 9 shifts the focus to quantitative data. Having this chapter appear immediately after Chapters 7 and 8 gives alternative ways to view research from a different perspective with equal importance. The author discusses quantitative data methods such as experimental research, quasi-experimental research, correlational research, causal-comparative research, survey research, cross-sectional research, and longitudinal research. This chapter is a good resource for novice researchers because it discusses quantitative research in a simple language that can be easily followed.

The third section, Data Analysis, is divided into two chapters. These chapters center on approaches to the analysis of qualitative data and quantitative data. While Chapter 10 focuses on data-analysis methods such as coding, discourse analysis, and content analysis, Chapter 11 discusses the stages of using quantitative data, such as checking and organizing data, coding data, entering data in a com-

puter program, analyzing the reliability of data, and performing inferential statistics.

The final section of the book, *Bringing It All Together*, consists of one chapter. Drawing on a framework provided by Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz (2013), it explores various ways in which teachers move from evidence to argument. The author provides clear examples of how data with research synthesis construct a compelling argument. While this chapter's understanding grows from the content of previous chapters, TESOL educators and professors can still use this chapter in isolation to help students understand the research-based argument.

Research Methods for Language Teaching is highly recommended for a range of educators and researchers: graduate students, TESOL educators, language teachers, and novice researchers. It is best suited for use as the main text in an applied linguistics course. The strengths of the well written and smoothly executed book include informative guiding questions, reflective prompts, and teaching activities. Avineri meets her stated objective: "to provide you with a range of approaches that can facilitate your development of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with applicable, collaborative and empowering language education research" (p. 10). As teacher-scholars, we can rely on this book in our research-based classrooms to engage our students in a dialogue about teaching and researching and how classroom-based research enhances pedagogical practices.

References

Lunsford, A. A., & Ruszkiewicz, J. J. (2013). *Everything's an argument*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins.