言語文化共同研究プロジェクト２０２１

英語教育の新たなる実践に向けて

日　野　信　行
小　口　一　郎
小　田　節　子
服　部　拓　哉

大阪大学大学院言語文化研究科

２０２２

まえがき

本論集は、大阪大学における共同研究プロジェクト「英語教育の新たなる実践に向けて」（Toward New Practices in English Language Teaching）の報告書である。英語教育の諸課題に対応する新しい実践を目指す 4 編の論考から成る。英語教育の社会的貢献が求められる今日、本報告書がこれからの英語教育のあり方について有益な示唆をもたらすことを願う。

（日野信行）

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言語文化共同研究プロジェクト 2021

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Academic writing course for postgraduates: A revised syllabus

Ichiro Koguchi

1. Background

A strong globalising drive has been underway across the world's academia. The need for internationalising higher education, already recognised in the late 20th century, has been rapidly growing in the beginning decades of the present millennium with the advent of computerised global networks of communication. Japan was not slow to respond to this worldwide tide. National policies to open universities and other higher education institutions to foreign students have led to a rise in the intake of international students. Overseas nationals studying in Japan were 321,214 as of January 2019, of which those studying in higher education or university preparatory courses were 228,403 (JASSO, 2020). The latter value indicates a 43% increase from ten years before, and a 76% rise in the past 20 years. The number of Japanese students studying abroad at higher education levels has also been on the rise. There were 107,346 such students in 2019. Despite some fluctuations from 2017 to 2019, broadly speaking, a steady upward trend has continued since the beginning of the present century. Indeed, the past twenty years have witnessed nearly a five-fold increase in the number of Japanese studying at overseas higher education institutions.

In line with this current, educational reform has been on the agenda. Among the policy measures put forward by the national government, a recent prominent one is the "Top Global University" programme (MEXT, n.d.). Thirty-seven universities have been selected for financial support to revise their curricula, teaching practice and educational environment, the last including learning support facilities and student exchange programmes. Starting in 2014, this multi-faceted initiative has served to increase international students and non-Japanese fulltime faculty members at Japanese universities, as well as Japanese students studying abroad. It has also contributed to the change in the mindset of teachers and administrators. As international students and staff members have become an everyday sight on campus, and written and spoken communication in English has been a norm, not an exception, the consciousness that Japanese universities are part of the global community of higher education has visibly grown among university members. Under these changing circumstances, the nurturing of attitude and competence for international communication is becoming a top priority.

Historically, English language education in Japan has been plagued by a number of problems (Alizadeh, 2019). Although collective proficiency is steadily improving, especially among younger learners, it is a common understanding that there are still many issues to be addressed. The performance of Japanese learners on the TOEFL iBT® test, for instance, is far from impressive. Their average score of 72 ranks among the lowest of the participating countries (ETS, 2019). This result may entail a wide range of implications, but considering the chief aim of the test, i.e. to screen candidates for postgraduate study in the US, it is understood that Japanese learners perform poorly in the area of English proficiency required for academic research.

Acquiring a satisfactory level of proficiency in academic English is thus a challenge for Japanese learners. This may not be surprising since the Japanese language is situated among the farthest from English in terms of language families and grammar. An effective approach is then called for to facilitate acquisition of English by this group of learners. It has been argued that academic discourse is itself an independent "genre," requiring specialised approaches and methods to overcome hurdles in teaching and learning (Charles and Pecorari, 2016). Recognising both the need to consider genre and the difficulties Japanese learners are faced with, Shimamura (2021) works on methods to teach oral academic presentation in English in scientific disciplines. This highly technical study, as well as other research work of a similar nature, is supplemented by semi-academic guidebooks targeting more basic issues in academic communication. Another of Shimamura's publications (Shimamura, 2016) is a good example, intended as a training book for oral presentation at beginner and intermediate levels.

Written academic discourse is also an important topic and has attracted attention. A translation of Swales and Feak (1995) was published in 1998. This was followed by the publication of several books that considered the needs of Japanese learners, e.g. Isogai (1998), Armor, et al., (1999), and editage (2016). The last is a semi-academic work that collects useful tips to improve writing. This practical book also provides a quantitative analysis of texts produced by Japanese academic writers. Not unexpectedly, grammatical mistakes account for nearly half of all problem cases. Aside from this, however, no fewer than 25% are related to intelligibility and style. Inappropriate word choice comes next with a ratio of 10%. These results signify that Japanese users of academic English typically encounter problems in sentence constructions, the right word choice and collocation, as well as grammatical errors owing to carelessness or lack of formal linguistic knowledge. As simply correctable, grammatical errors can be left to drills and traditional form-oriented learning. A great deal of educational resources should therefore be directed towards acquiring the active knowledge of academic vocabulary as well stylistic techniques that can lead to clarity and communicability.

The background described so far justifies holding specialised university courses for training English academic writing skills. Indeed, in recent years, a number of universities have offered credit-based courses in academic writing. In the academic year 2006 at Osaka University, the current author introduced a postgraduate academic writing course for the Graduate School of Language and Culture. This one-semester class, comprising fifteen 90-minute meetings, has since become a part of the regular menu of the master's degree curriculum. The teaching is principally intended to cater for the needs of master's degree candidates who have not received formal training in written academic discourse. After the first year of teaching, the current author compiled a brief overview of his teaching in the form of a research article (Koguchi, 2007). This piece discussed nearly all the class topics covered in the 2006 teaching. Of these only two were directly grammatical: Punctuation Rules and Articles. Most of the others were related to style and vocabulary: Formal Academic Style, Thesis Organisation, Information Order, Hedging, and Collocation. For practical skills ancillary to academic writing, common forms of letters and emails were taught. Effective ways to use web resources were also discussed.

The course has continued down to 2021 and is expected to stay in the curriculum for several more years. Its overall structure, as well as teaching methods, has been retained since 2006. The teaching materials, however, have been mostly replaced. At first the materials were imported, with permission, from the Academic Writing courses conducted by Dr Maggie Charles at the University of Oxford. Although the quality of these teaching materials were excellent and they proved useful for international students at Oxford, it was soon found necessary to find texts and sample sentences that better suited Osaka University master's degree candidates. Replacement materials have principally been sought in published sources: academic writing resource books, writing guides for university students, and research articles. Care has been taken in the classroom not to infringe copy right restrictions. For instance, the instructor makes effort to have students read from the original books and articles as much as possible, and when materials have to be shared in handouts, he limits the volume of extracts to a minimum, acknowledges the sources, and uses formats not digitally reproduceable.

2. Overview of the Revised Course

The course revised for 2021 is composed of nine topics: 1. Punctuation Marks, 2. Articles, 3. Avoiding Plagiarism and Citations Systems, 4. Style and Vocabulary of Academic Writing, 5. Organisation of Academic Theses and Papers, 6. Hedging, 7. Tenses, 8. Abstracts and 9. Information Order and Text Flow. Three topics that were in the 2006 syllabus, Features of Academic Writing, Language Patterns and Collocation, and Using Web Resources have been dropped, as it was decided that they could be taught as effectively by being integrated in other topics. The use of Web resources, in particular, has become too common an activity to receive treatment under a separate topic. Two topics, Avoiding Plagiarism and Citations Systems, and Abstracts, have been added.

Of these new topics, Avoiding Plagiarism and Citations Systems was first adopted in 2015, following a scandal of research misconduct that shook the Japanese academia in the previous year (STAP revisited, 2015). Although this incident was in a highly specialised area of science, artificially induced pluripotency in non-stem cells, its impact was broader. It initiated a nationwide movement to strengthen research ethics by establishing formal guidelines in research ethics and introducing related teaching programmes. It is now effectively compulsory for postgraduate students, whether in the humanities, social sciences, natural science, engineering or medicine, to receive education in research integrity (MEXT, 2021). In this context, the current author decided to contribute to ethics education in his course. Thus plagiarism was topicalised in the syllabus, and teaching of citation rules was introduced as a way to pre-empt misbehaviour in research. The issue of Abstracts, informally touched upon under other topics from the beginning year of 2006, was also made an independent course unit recently.

The following is a selective look at the course content of 2021, with emphasis on features that are not covered in the author's 2007 article.

3. Course Topics and Teaching

3. 1 Punctuation Marks

Punctuation marks bear an important part of written communication. For producing accurate academic discourse, attention must be paid to their usage. Knowledge of them is also indispensable to achieve stylistic integrity. Yet, as Truss (2003) points out, they tend to be relegated to the periphery of language studies and pedagogy. In fact there are not many comprehensive guidebooks available on the market. For this reason, the current course makes use of independent pieces of information—instructions and sample texts—from a variety of sources: e.g. Hacker and Sommers (2012), MLA (2009), and the website called GrammarBook.com.

Many of the punctuation marks are already familiar with students at master's level. The focus of teaching is therefore on rules that are not usually included in textbooks and grammar reference books written in Japanese. Relatively unfamiliar areas for young students, such as the semicolon, colon, dash and hyphen, are taken up in the class in the form of a lecture. This part of teaching, prescriptive in nature, is then supplemented by the practice of writing academic letters. Students are shown four different letter samples and asked to write their own version with one of these samples as a model. This has proven to be a good basic training, for academic letters often include a wider variety of punctuation marks than personal letters. Students are allowed to imitate the sentences and text structure of the sample of their choice, but they also need to exercise their originality, as they are asked to address their message to a real person or people, or to an existing institution. Quite a few changes must be made to the chosen sample whose background setting is fictitious. One of these samples is taken from Swales and Feak (2000), and the other three are original pieces created by the instructor.

3. 2 Articles

The teaching of articles adopts a double approach similar to Punctuation Marks: prescriptive study and practical exercises. In the prescriptive study part, the class simply read and discuss Berry (1993). After that, they perform blank-filling tasks for about 20 minutes over six weeks of class meetings. Of these tasks some are taken from the relevant sections of Swales and Feak (2012), and the others are made by the current author by editing a selection of texts from ETS (2003). It has been understood after a few years of teaching that this form of exercise has its own problems. In the first place, it is not very comfortable to work on, because this particular kind of exercise is intolerant of even small errors, requiring participants to come up with the correct answer for each blank. Another concern is that higher achievers tend to improve satisfactorily whereas the others do not visibly progress. Tasks other than blank-filling should be devised in the near future.

3. 3 Plagiarism and Citation

As stated above, postgraduates studying in Japan are required to receive education in research ethics. Osaka University assigns every postgraduate in their first year to read JSPS (2015), an instructional booklet on research integrity, and discuss it with their supervisor. They therefore are supposed to have understood the essential of the issue. In view of this, the current course has chosen to teach the more practical side: the way students can materialise their book-based knowledge into practice. This is done by a careful perusal of the relevant chapters in style manuals for research paper writers. Two academic style manuals, APA (2010) and MLA (2009), have been selected. The former represents the styles used in psychology, linguistics and related areas; the latter is used by researchers in the humanities.

Both works concisely describe the notion of plagiarism. The underlying principle seems to be shared by the two: “authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own work” (APA, 2010, p. 16). In addition to descriptive elaboration on this principle, MLA (2009) includes a reference to “unintentional plagiarism” (p. 55), a kind of irregularity that tends to be committed by student writers and by those for whom English is a second language. It is pointed out there that plagiarism can occur when novice writers do not know the accepted rules of academic writing and when L2 writers copy word by word from source works in fear of making grammatical errors. APA (2010), on the other hand, warns of “self-plagiarism” (p. 16). It is impermissible, according to this manual, for academic writers to “present their own previously published work as new scholarship” (p.16). The teaching of the current course pays attention to these and other insights put forward from the humanities and psychology-linguistics perspectives in both books.

The APA and MLA citation systems are also examined closely. This part of teaching is largely activity-based, assigning students independent research on the citation method employed in their discipline. They are then asked to present their method in detail in front of the class. The majority of students use the APA manual, while just a few follow the MLA method. Other styles are reported once a few years: e.g. the method adopted by the Modern Humanities Research Association of the UK. During student presentations, the instructor intervenes on relevant occasions to provide advisory comments intended to make students aware of the role of citation systems to prevent plagiarism, drawing their attention to the importance of paying respect to the authors of existing research.

3. 4 Organisation of Academic Theses and Papers

The teaching of this topic has not changed much from when the course started in 2006. The main idea is to familiarize master’s degree candidates with commonly used forms of theses and articles. This is expected to facilitate the writing up of their theses, as many of them do not know how to proceed with formally structured composition. In view of this state of affairs, tables of contents in master's and doctoral theses previously submitted to the Graduate School of Language and Culture are introduced for a start. Then the general-specific-general movement in the typical chapter arrangement of a thesis is taught. The IMRD (Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion) form of scientific papers is also studied.

Following this outlining of the structure of theses and articles, the class work on the two most stylised sections of academic papers: the introduction and conclusion. The structure of the introduction of an academic article or thesis is explicated by Swales (1990) at great length. This work famously discovered a widely shared, but till then little noticed, stylised form of an introduction, which is named the CARS (create-a-research-space) model. The model has then been modified to form a part of the textbook, Swales and Feak (1994, 2012). Initially in 1990, the model consisted of three "moves" and a number of "steps" under each move, but the textbook version is somewhat simplified, with each move comprising only one or few steps. Still, the current writer feels the need for further effort to make the CARS model more approachable for students. Hence the course has adopted a much simplified version. It is made up of the same three principal moves, but each move has only one or two steps: Move 1: Establishing a Research Territory with the step, Claiming Centrality; Move 2: Establishing a "Niche," which comes with the step, Indicating a Gap or Problem; and Move 3: Occupying the Niche, which comprises two steps: Outlining the Proposed Research or Presenting the Nature of the Research, and Stating the Significance or Value of the Research. This three-move, four-step form has proved effective. One reason may be that the class is a nearly homogeneous group consisting of postgraduates in linguistics, applied linguistics and humanities. There is not a great disciplinary variety that might require more detailed treatment of this topic.

Likewise the structure of conclusions is simplified to only four moves: Summary, Contextualising of the Research, Limitations of the Study, and Suggestions for Future Work. It has been observed that this method works rather well in the current course structure.

3. 5 Abstracts

When this academic writing course started in 2006, the research article abstract was not considered to be part of the teaching. To the course instructor the writing of abstracts appeared to be a simple task that required little special training. This assumption was not right. Students' comments in the class from time to time referred to the need of improving their abstract writing, and the abstract is actually discussed, although briefly, in Swales' textbook (Swales, 1994; 2012). In 2009, a textbook dedicated to this genre of academic discourse was published (Swales & Feak, 2009). It was decided therefore to give a formal treatment to this genre in the course.

The class read from Swales and Feak (2009) and then work on selected tasks from the same textbook. As this book is too substantial for just one or two class meetings, the textbook authors' own summary PDF document, then available on the Internet but now no more, is also used (Feak & Swales, n.d.). The teaching starts with the three functions of the abstract: summary, screening device, and preview, and then proceeds to characteristic moves to form an abstract: Background, Outline of Research, Materials and Methods, Results, and Discussion (and Future Research). The understanding of this rather complex structure is then consolidated by performing analysis of existing samples. Rhetorical techniques to facilitate the flow of argument suitable for this genre are also looked at. Although not common in the humanities and linguistics, the structured abstract is also discussed. The notable feature of this abstract is explicitly to label each move or paragraph by a heading: e.g. Background, Aim, Method, Results, and Conclusions.

Differences in academic convention should be touched upon. Textbooks and research articles on the abstract usually discuss short texts, ranging from 100 words to 200 at the longest. In Japan however, master's candidates are usually required to submit a much longer version to accompany their master's thesis, in 600 words in many cases, sometimes even approaching 1,000. It can be said that the teaching about the abstract in this course can apply to these longer forms required in this country, but in the future, a class session specifically designed to deal with writings of greater lengths should be in order.

3. 6 Information Order and Text Flow

When constructing an argument in English, recommended information order is usually quite simple. A sentence should start with given information and then proceed to new information in its second half. The idea is that if what is already known by the reader comes first, the act of reading will go smoothly. A preview of contextual knowledge at sentence initial position will certainly help the understanding of what has yet to be known in the subsequent part of the sentence. This is no doubt a fundamental formula that should be in mind when teaching a good textual flow. However, the current author's teaching experience has suggested that Japanese learners of English seem to have a somewhat different intuitive sense of the right information order. While they largely agree with this received view of information order, they often feel comfortable even when the said order is inverted, i.e. new information coming first then followed by given information. It is worth investigating under what linguistic conditions this deviation from the norm occurs, and ultimately what psychological mechanism allows the inversion. At the moment it seems important to respect students' intuition and not to be too dogmatic when teaching information order.

The acquisition of skills to realise a smooth flow in argument or exposition is in any way a challenge. Students need to read good examples and imitate techniques there employed. This course presents students with sample texts from Swales and Feak (2012), making them aware which textual elements contribute to the coherence and cohesion of a successfully written text. The following is an example:

❶ Research has shown that caffeine does indeed reduce sleepiness and can lead to better academic performance since students can spend more time studying. ❷ Despite its effectiveness in counteracting sleepiness, caffeine can have a negative impact on subsequent sleep, which for many students may already be compromised. ❸ Specifically, caffeinated beverages consumed near bedtime at night can prolong sleep onset and reduce sleep efficiency and depth, thus affecting both sleep quality and duration. ❹ Most of the research on how caffeine affects sleepiness/alertness has focused on coffee or no-doze pills. ❺ However, a new kind of caffeinated drink has become increasingly popular, namely

Fig. 1 (Swales & Feak, 2012, p. 31)

The arrows and underlines indicate how the subject of the text, "caffeine," is referred to by pronouns, by the repetition of the same noun, and then by inflected verb forms. The text's point is also elaborated by the underlined descriptive clauses. Swales and Feak (2012) has a few more sample texts for further study. But the tasks attached to them seem a little too challenging for learners. On this account, as in Fig. 2, the instructor adds some scaffolding to sample texts in the manner of Fig. 1:

Although the biological clock functions regardless of the normal 24-hour cycle of light and darkness, light is still involved in resetting and regulating the clock. Sunlight resets the internal biological clock each day to synchronize the rhythms of activity of the clock genes, promoting the production of certain substance, such as hormones, which are necessary for maintaining good health. It was once thought that aging disrupts the biological clock. But, recent research (Czeisler et al., 2005) has shown that the body temperature and hormone fluctuations of the elderly are as regular as those of the young. This information can be considered valuable in the treatment of sleep disorders in the elderly.

Fig. 2 (Adopted from Swales and Feak, 2012, p. 35)

Textual flow entails a number of other issues. Writers must be conscious of internal logical coherence of what they are writing, and conjunctives and linking adverbials can also be significant contributors to smooth logic. In addition to these structural and grammatical aspects, stylistic or rhetorical issues have also to be addressed. One of them is the choice of the determiner *this* or the definite article *the* when referring to a word or concept that has occurred in an preceding part of the text.

Generally students are not clearly aware of the difference between these two words. It is therefore necessary to show them the distinction clearly. Using sample sentences from Swales and Feak (2012), the following instruction is made: the pattern of *this* + a noun (phrase) can refer to a word or part of the preceding sentence or sentences; it can also refer to what is signified by the whole previous sentence or sentence group. In contrast, *the* + a noun (phrase) can be used when this noun (phrase) repeats exactly the same noun (phrase) that has appeared in the immediately foregoing sentence or sentence group. Such a difference in usage between *this* and *the* is probably due to the semantic function of each word; *this* consciously evokes the presence of an antecedent, while *the* has a more neutral function that logically points to a referent. The variance in usage between the pronouns *this* and *it* is also taught in a similar manner.

Sample sentences for the study of *this, the* and *it* are available in textbooks such as Swales and Feak (2012), but further exploration can find other instances of interest. For example, the following extracts from Park (1971) are worth taking note of, as they consolidate and add to our understanding of *the* and *this*. The italics in both texts are mine:

> a) The decline of painting since the Renaissance he attributed to the growth of empirical philosophy from the time of Bacon. *This emphasis* is altogether absent from Hazlitt's criticism. (p. 126)

> b) The preoccupation of the early nineteenth century with the fallacious nature of the physical analogy appears at first sight to have *little relevance* to the social, moral, political, economic and aesthetic problems of a new industrial age. . . . *The irrelevance,* however, is only apparent. . . . (p. 22)

In Extract a), *This emphasis* points to the act of *attributing* the decline of painting to the growth of empirical philosophy. The word *attributing* is not semantically coterminous with *emphasis*. But the strong determining force of *This* makes it possible to read the word that means "to find the cause of" as effectively signifying "to highlight a particular aspect of historical causation." Extract b) is also intriguing. The noun phrase *little relevance* is referred back to by the combination of *The* and *irrelevance*, related but not exactly the same phrasing as *little relevance*. Considering the functional similarity of *little* and the prefix *ir*-, it is justified to think of these two phrases as semantically corresponding to each other. Extract b) can thus be regarded as containing a rhetorical technique that fits well in its contextual discourse. As it requires interpretive effort on the part of the reader, Extract

a) may only have a limited range of pedagogical application, but b) appears to be a good strategy to make writing colourful while retaining the rigour in signification necessary in academic writing.

4. Concluding Remarks

As this piece is a humble attempt to describe a syllabus, it is not possible to draw logical conclusions. Yet this kind of effort may be considered useful, as it can be constructive for teaching practitioners to look back formally on their educational methods and practice. By this summary of teaching, at least some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current author's attempts have become clear. The strengths may need no further discussion as they have been implied in the above expositions. Aspects to be improved upon should be briefly commented upon as suggestions for future work.

Several important issues have yet to be taken up. Above all, the current syllabus does not include two key sections that constitute a thesis or article: Literature Review and Discussion. Both of these may not be easy topics to deal with, but as insights and data from research and teaching practice have been steadily accumulating, at this stage it should be possible to create materials and teaching plans to cover these areas. Literature Review, in particular, might become an immediate addition to the syllabus, since there has been a textbook commercially available (Feak & Swales, 2009). Further, the teaching of vocabulary, complete with collocational patterns, should be strengthened in the near future. Our vision in this department has been armed by recent research efforts, e.g. the academic vocabulary lists of Coxhead and Paquot, and studies based on these lexical collections.

These and other aspects must be continually considered and reviewed to provide quality teaching that can hopefully educate young academics to be active on the global stage.

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執筆者

日 野 信 行 （ひの　のぶゆき）　大阪大学大学院言語文化研究科教授

小 口 一 郎 （こぐち　いちろう）　大阪大学マルチリンガル教育センター教授

小 田 節 子 （おだ　せつこ）　金城学院大学人間科学部教授

服 部 拓 哉 （はっとり　たくや）　大阪大学大学院言語文化研究科博士後期課程

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