Reflections on the positioning, politics, and pedagogy of a language education/research writing subject for international HDR students

Alisa Percy & Emily Purser
University of Wollongong
Teaching staff

Emily Purser

Alisa Percy

Orientation & news

This is a discussion space where you can ask general questions about this subject, or specific questions about English language teaching.

Recent activity

Activity since Tuesday, 30 September 2014, 9:08 AM
Full report of recent activity...
Nothing new since your last login

Sharefile (for larger files)

This is the place with all the language learning resources, tests, tips - visit often, explore and use the resources, and don't be afraid to post here, too.

LD's Facebook Page

if you're a Facebook user, please drop by LD's page and 'like' it, to help spread the word about what we do, and help us help you!
KEY QUESTIONS

Politics

How does language education emerge as a priority in the HDR space?
What role should supervisors play?

Positioning

How do language education subjects/programs get positioned?
What are students’ and supervisors’ expectations of these?

Pedagogy

What constitutes an appropriate language education in the HDR space?
What can we reasonably do in a 39 hour subject to prepare students for the rest of their degree?
4 year PhD which includes 48cp of qualifying coursework
Intended to:
• embed research training
• improve completion rates
• appeal to international markets
RESH ENROLMENTS

- Masters
- PhD
- PhD(I)

THE PHD (INTEGRATED)

Who qualifies?

- Candidates who do not fully satisfy the criteria for the PhD
- Candidates with a significant time gap between their previous coursework qualification and the proposed doctoral study. This may be particularly relevant for mature age domestic candidates
- Candidates who would benefit from a more structured program
- Candidates with borderline English language proficiency
HDR English Language Requirement

A relaxation of the IELTS English language requirement for a PhD or MPhil applicant may be granted by the ADR if the applicant receives a score of $x$ overall, but the score is less than $x$ in only one of the bands. However the following conditions apply:

- the supervisor must have interviewed the applicant personally and be convinced the applicant’s English language skills are adequate (Our Faculty HDR Office can assist with arranging the interview)

- the applicant commits to successfully completing RESH901 and to regularly attend the Faculty’s English conversation groups during the first year of enrolment
LANGUAGE QUALIFICATIONS OF ENROLLED STUDENTS, SPRING 2014

Student numbers

- IELTS 6 or Eq.
- IELTS 6.5 or Eq.
- IELTS 7+
- Unknown
“The introduction of the PhD (Integrated) and the compulsory RESH900: Fundamentals for HDR Writing may go some way to addressing the needs of students from non-English speaking backgrounds in their first year of candidature. RESH900/901 is also available as a zero credit point subject for ‘regular’ HDR students in the first year of candidature.” (Excerpt, HDR Student Support Review, UOW 2012)
Assuring English language development in HDR studies

- Verify language competence prior to acceptance into a HDR program.
- **RESH900/901: Fundamentals for HDR Writing** or equivalent subject compulsory for HDR students who enter with the minimum ELP.
- The **Commencement of Candidature Form** and **Research Proposal Review** used to identify students’ communication needs.
- The **Annual Progress Report** used to monitor students’ development of communication skills.
- Professional development of HDR supervisors to include methods for providing constructive feedback on students’ communication skills.
- Language support for HDR students will be negotiated between the Faculty and Learning, Teaching and Curriculum staff.
On completion of this subject, students should be able to:

(a) **Compile and annotate a professional bibliography** of varied sources relating to your research topic.

(b) **Engage in open and ‘accountable’ conversation and critical peer review** with fellow students.

(c) **Build and analyse a simple corpus of research publications** from your discipline.

(d) **Determine your own language development needs**, on the basis of tests, feedback and corpus analysis, and plan intelligently for ongoing personal language growth.

(e) **Develop and edit a research paper** relevant to your current stage in the research process (eg literature review, research proposal, conference paper/journal article).

(f) **Present your research orally** in a limited time to a non-specialised audience.
RESH STAGE 1

Academic vocabulary
Variation in types of research papers
Selecting and analysing journal articles
Summarising and paraphrasing
Using the language of evaluation
RESH STAGE 1

Academic vocabulary

Variation in types of research papers

Selecting and analysing journal articles

Summarising and paraphrasing

Using the language of evaluation

Annotated Bibliography

Feedback on choices and patterns in student’s use of EL resources at discourse-semantic level

Draft Research Paper

Corpus Development

Students submit a research paper they are already working on to receive extensive feedback on their writing

Students select 15 texts from their readings and create their own corpus for analysis of the language in their discipline

Feedforward
RESH STAGE 1

Academic vocabulary
Variation in types of research papers
Selecting and analysing journal articles
Summarising and paraphrasing
Using the language of evaluation

RESH STAGE 2

Planning and writing the research paper
Coherence and cohesion in academic texts

Corpus and concordance tools
Preparation of the oral presentation

Annotated Bibliography

Feedback on choices and patterns in student’s use of EL resources at discourse-semantic level

Draft Research Paper

Corpus Development

These include ‘Just the Word’, ‘British National Corpus’, and ‘AntConc’ for their own corpus analysis
“For novice writers working towards an appropriate academic voice, corpora and concordancers can provide an invaluable source of information about idiomatic or disciplinary use of English. Concordancers are designed to show words in context, and are thus useful for identifying collocations (words that go together) and grammatical patterns. This is particularly important for EAL writers seeking to enter discourse communities that are unsympathetic to the “different voices” mentioned above.” (Guerin & Picard, 2012, p.37)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date modified</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A General Approach to Causal Mediation Analysis</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mediation model between dimensions of social capital</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond Baron and Kenny Statistical</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias in Cross-Sectional Analyses of Longitudinal Mediation Analyses</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic evaluation The effect of money and economic growth</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic using Mediation Model China during the Global Financial Crisis</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Causal Mediation Analysis With</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation in Experimental and Nonexperimental Studies</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Analysis for Complex Mediational</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconsidering Baron and Kenny Myths and</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuben M. Baron and David A. Kenny</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaver-MediatingVariables</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mediation Formula A guide to the assessment of causal...</td>
<td>17/09/2013 5:17 PM</td>
<td>Text Document</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Reporting verbs –
   Present, observed, shown, measures, substantiate

The most frequent reporting verbs in my corpus are ‘present’, ‘observed’, ‘shown’ and ‘measures’.

The most common reporting verb that I use in my writing are the words ‘shows’, ‘indicates’: “This study shows..”, “This study indicates…”.

The AntConc analysis shows what reporting verbs that other researchers in my field commonly use especially when describing results that show a pattern or a trend over certain time period.

Example:
“...sea level time series present a correlation coefficient...”
“However, high contrast is observed between western and eastern...”
“...sea-level has also been shown to be inconsistent...”

There was one particular reporting verb that was used in one of the papers in my corpus that I did not know its meaning, “substantiate”. This word only appeared twice in my corpus. I further investigated the meaning of “substantiate” and I found that it means “provide evidence to support or prove the truth of”.

Example: “Unlike the overall results in Fig. 9, no measure of variability is available for individual locations and, therefore, no statistical test can substantiate them.” This is another interesting new word that I found in my corpus and instead of using 4 words (provides evidence to support) to state something that has no evidence, I now know that a single word “substantiate” can replace them.

Now I know that when I want to state my results especially when referring to any visual graphs, charts, or maps, there are various other reporting verbs that I can use.
RESH900 has shown me that academic writing is not only about using proper English words and grammar, but there is a certain format or if I can say, rules and regulation in academic writing.

This course has exposed me to many tools that I never knew existed before that can further guide me in writing correctly according to the academic style. AntConc, Just The Word, Endnote, Comwriter, British National Corpus and Academic Phrase Bank introduced in class were really beneficial and I will definitely use these tools in the future.
RESH STAGE 1

Academic vocabulary
Variation in types of research papers
Selecting and analysing journal articles
Summarising and paraphrasing
Using the language of evaluation

RESH STAGE 2

Planning and writing the research paper
Coherence and cohesion in academic texts

**Corpus and concordance tools**

Preparing the oral presentation

RESH STAGE 3

Final research paper
Oral presentation
Corpus analysis and reflection on learning
The most interesting assignment for me was the three minute presentation, where I learnt how to structure my presentation to cater to an audience outside of my research field and to deliver key messages within a short period of time. Although nerve wracking, it was actually fun!

Group discussions in class were always fun and I was able to polish my speaking skills with friends.

Feedback in class and those that I received for my assignments from the lecturers were absolutely important and I really appreciate the thorough comments given. This allowed me to detect areas that I need to improve and correct.
# Research Paper Marking Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate text structure</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Effective introduction&lt;br&gt;• Clear and logical structure&lt;br&gt;• Effective use of headings and sub-headings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective information flow</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Effective use of topic sentences&lt;br&gt;• Effective use of paragraph and sentence themes to convey logical connections within text&lt;br&gt;• Appropriate use of logical connectors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of evidence and referencing</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Appropriate integration of evidence&lt;br&gt;• Evidence supports the argument&lt;br&gt;• Critical stance, as shown in the selection &amp; treatment of evidence&lt;br&gt;• Effective use of language to express evaluation or opinion (language of appraisal, modality, concessional language)&lt;br&gt;• Appropriate and accurate referencing style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Style</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Effective use of nominalisation&lt;br&gt;• Appropriate use of the passive voice&lt;br&gt;• Language adequately formal and impersonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Language grammatically accurate (Articles/ Prepositions/ Tense/ Syntax/ Word choice/ <strong>punctuation</strong>, etc)&lt;br&gt;• Effective mix and use of simple, compound and complex sentences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IELTS 6.5 Writing sample

Student enrolled: PhD (Integrated), RESH900

Language qualification: IELTS 6.0 (Reading 6.5, Writing 6.0, Listening 6.5, Speaking 6.0)

Significant problems with: Appropriate lexico-grammatical choices

Abstract: The spontaneous combustion of coal is a serious threat to the safe production of the coal mine enterprises. Therefore, it is very important to study the characteristics of coal spontaneous combustion indicator gases parameters for ensuring safe and efficient coal mining. By experiment, we study the characteristic parameters of coal spontaneous combustion indicator gases of coal samples from the 13-1 seam of Kouzidong coal mine, and the rules of the generated gas due to spontaneous combustion with temperature variation of coal spontaneous combustion process. According to the results, it is more accurate and suitable to use the ratio of indicator gases to reflect the value of the coal temperature as well as the state of the underground coal spontaneous combustion. The conclusion can be used to monitor and control the spontaneous combustion of coal, and it provides a reliable theory basis for the design of the coal mining method, and the formulation of fire prevention measures. It also has an important guiding significance to the efficient and safe production of the coal mine.

Key words: spontaneous combustion; indicator gas; characteristic parameter

1 Introduction

Coal spontaneous combustion is a serious threat to coal production and storage safety not only it can leading to a large amount of coal resource loss, but also even causing and the hazards of major coal accidents and with severe social impact. Coal spontaneous combustion is an abnormally complicated physical and chemical process of dynamic change which is caused by the automatic development of oxidation and the gradual accumulation of heat. Indicator gases parameter refers to the gas concentration or concentration ratio and the gas production rate and those gases are generated in the process of coal spontaneous combustion or due to the change, and to a certain extent can characterize spontaneous combustion state or development trend of fire gas concentration. The research of coal spontaneous combustion indicator gases parameters of 13-1 seam of Kouzidong coal mine provides the basis for a methodology of design of for coal production, accurate prediction of spontaneous combustion in the gob areas and effective measure development of fire prevention and control. Which has an important guiding significance for coal mine safety in production.

2 Overview of seams

Kouzidong mine is located in the west of Huainan coalfield, the western part of the south wing of the Chengqiao anticline and with an axis direction towards northwest overall of which south wing
IELTS 6.0 Writing sample

Student enrolled: PhD (Integrated), RESH900

Language qualification: IELTS 6.0 (Reading 5.5, Writing 6.0, Listening 5.5, Speaking 7.0)

Significant problems with:
Coherence
Appropriate selection and use of evidence
Higher order analytical and critical
Appropriate lexico-grammatical choices
General outlines for the information security governance

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction:

This literature review is supplied to have much more in-depth examination for the concepts and their points. The main purpose of this literature review is to obtain a sound fundamental and theoretical foundation in order to build a core instrument which is very important in directing the scope of surveys. There are many important criteria in selecting literature review to distinguish the strength and weak points of the current study. One of the most significant challenges that faces most businesses is how to secure and protect the information assets in any organizational system to protect the information in security system, it is highly significant to achieve efficient and functional arrangement. Furthermore, there is clear concern about the level of comprehension which is utilized to information system in many organizations. It is very substantial to increase the intensity of information security, this will be achieved by treating it as a corporate governance issue that demands the concern of corporate boards. Moreover, to find a resolution to information technology system problems of any organization, it should be ranged with corporate governance of organization. In many organization information technology (IT) governance,
Individual improvement between first and final draft of research paper, Autumn 2013
The second module is language analysis and reflection. In my opinion, this part is very critical for developing writing skills. At the beginning of the subject, I did vocabulary tests in our lab study and I found that I have limited vocabularies. Initially, I learned how to use the vocabulary profiler in Lab activity on week 3 which allows us to copy our articles and it will categorize vocabularies into general words and academic words. Knowing this website is very helpful for me because I can build up my academic vocabularies and learn new general words. (RESH900 student - Marketing)

The next topic was Corpus analysis which is my favourite in this lecture. This is absolutely awesome tool to improve my writing. Previously, my supervisor always complained about the use of inappropriate words. I just found the words using thesaurus in online dictionary and plugged in the words with similar meaning without knowing how it actually used in formal writing. I like to use BYU and COCA corpus for the general corpus and AntConc for my own corpus. JustTheWord website also helps me in instant way and I use AntConc for more specific and technical term in my field. (RESH900 student - Accounting)

Analysing sentences, presentation and annotated bibliography were interesting to learn during the session. It is interesting to note that when writing sentences certain words were frequently used together in any sentence. Also, in some sentences, I could also see that the words I selected were followed by the preposition and preceded by the verb. Some nouns when used with other words show a different meaning. I realised that a paragraph contains a lot of themes and I should be aware of these themes when writing paragraphs in my thesis. (RESH900 student - Accounting)

Specifically, in the series of grammatical lectures in week 5 and 6, the academic writing style is broken down from passage to sentence level, which helps me to have better understanding of text structure and logical flow of the overall organization for academic writing. The concept of nominalization is introduced to tackle the difficulty brought by expanded noun group. And in the lecture of following week the stance and citation styles as well as reporting verbs are discussed, which gives a lot of insight details of actual writing process. (RESH900 student - Informatics)
In addition to Swales, Halliday, Hyland, Lea & Street...

Informing the program design:
- Cadman & Cargill, (nd.) Integrated Bridging Program at the University of Adelaide, 1995-2005
- Cargill & Adams 2005, Learning discipline-specific research English for a world stage: A self-access concordancing tool?

Recently discovered and interested in exploring more:
CHALLENGES/QUESTIONS

- Developing and maintaining dialogue with faculties
- Engaging the supervisor
- Managing student expectations
- Marking many different topics and papers to be marked
- The extent and nature of feedback provided
KEY QUESTIONS

Politics
How does language education emerge as a priority in the HDR space?
What role should supervisors play?

Positioning
How do language education subjects/programs get positioned?
What are students' and supervisors' expectations of these?

Pedagogy
What constitutes an appropriate language education in the HDR space?
What can we reasonably do in a 39 hour subject to prepare students for the rest of their degree?