

EAP in the North: the Language of Academic English

Part 1: The grammar of academic English

Part 2: Academic language and classroom materials

- Sample materials
- Practical task - generating ideas for language focus and development

BALEAP TEAP competency framework

An EAP teacher will be able to facilitate students' acquisition of the language, skills and strategies required for studying in a further or higher education context and to support students' understanding of approaches to interpreting and responding to the requirements of academic tasks and their related processes.

Specific TEAP Competencies:

Academic discourse	have a high level of systemic language knowledge including knowledge of discourse analysis.
Text processing and text production	approaches to text classification and discourse analysis and will be able to organize courses, units and tasks around whole texts or text segments in ways that develop students' processing and production of spoken and written texts.

The full *BALEAP* TEAP competency framework is available at:

<http://www.baleap.org.uk/media/uploads/pdfs/teap-competency-framework.pdf>

A possible framework

Identify sources for language work:

1. Language from texts (that students encounter and/or produce)
2. Student output

Considerations:

- Type and purpose of the text
- Significant linguistic features for articulating meaning
- Noticing &/or practice in use

Example 1: Language from a text

- aspects and patterns of hedging

Example 2: Awareness raising and practice tasks in response to student written work

- nominalisation

Example 1 Language from a text

- aspects and patterns of hedging
- key principles: language from content; noticing patterns of use ; practice in form and use

Task 1: identify examples, patterns, focus on meaning and form

1. Recent research suggests that women are still paid approximately 20% less on average than men. It is believed that the main reason for the gender pay gap might be linked to the different career and life expectations of men and women.
2. Women appear to accept lower salaries and, therefore, employers offer lower salaries, which reduces women's expectations of what constitutes 'fair pay' – creating a vicious circle. This may be further reinforced by the fact that the degree subjects and occupations that women tend to be attracted to are those that carry less prestige and correspondingly lower levels of pay.
3. The fact that women seem to be satisfied with lower salaries might also be due to the fact that the average female graduate earns £3,000 less than the average male graduate. This difference in pay in young people at the start of their career could contribute to women feeling inferior and, thus, accepting lower salaries later in their career.
4. It is argued that family influence and career guidance at school may be partly responsible for the pay gap since men tend to study scientific subjects, while women are more likely to choose arts subjects.
5. It has been suggested that people's long-term values might play a part in the difference in pay. Men may be more motivated by a higher salary than women. In addition, employers tend to offer a salary based on a new employee's previous salary. Since a woman's salary is likely to be lower than that of a male employee in the same job, this keeps her lower down the pay scale compared to him.

Adapted from <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/res2003/media/chevalier.html>. Accessed 24 June 2003 © Marie Corbett, June 2003, Carol Irvine, 2010, University of Glasgow

Task 2: practice of form and use

Practice task: text without hedging

Recent research states that women are still paid approximately 20% less on average than men. The main reason for the gender pay gap is linked to the different career and life expectations of men and women.

Women accept lower salaries and, therefore, employers offer lower salaries, which reduces women's expectations of what constitutes 'fair pay' – creating a vicious circle. This is further reinforced by the fact that the degree subjects and occupations that women are attracted to are those that carry less prestige and correspondingly lower levels of pay.

The fact that women are satisfied with lower salaries is also due to the fact that the average female graduate earns £3,000 less than the average male graduate. This difference in pay in young people at the start of their career contributes to women feeling inferior and, thus, accepting lower salaries later in their career.

Family influence and career guidance at school are partly responsible for the pay gap since men study scientific subjects, while women choose arts subjects.

People's long-term values play a part in the difference in pay. Men are more motivated by a higher salary than women. In addition, employers offer a salary based on a new employee's previous salary. Since a woman's salary is lower than that of a male employee in the same job, this keeps her lower down the pay scale compared to him.

Some patterns for hedging

Pattern 1	X	suggests	(that)	+ sentence
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Pattern 2	X	may might could	+ infinitive without 'to'
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Pattern 3	It	is believed is argued has been suggested	(that)	+ sentence
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Pattern 4	X	appear seem tend are (more) likely is	+ infinitive with 'to'
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Use

Hedging devices are used in academic writing to put some distance between the writer and the information being written about. For example:

- the modal auxiliaries *may*, *might* and *could* are used to talk about the chances of something happening now or in the future
- the copular verbs *appear* and *seem* are used to talk about how things look
- the reporting verbs *believe* (as in *think*), *suggest* (a weaker version of *state*) and *argue* (used when the idea is more contentious) can be used in the active or passive
- the verb phrases *tend* and *be (more) likely* are used to talk about something that usually happens or probably will happen.

Example 2 Identifying language needs from student work

- nominalisation
- key principles: language from content; noticing patterns of use ; practice in form and use

Practical task:

1. Consider the text for your group and identify the following:
 - type and purpose of the text
 - significant linguistic features to work on

2. Outline possible ways to exploit this text:
 - for noticing/awareness raising
 - &/or practice

3. Poster presentation

Practical Task**Text 1**

How could you exploit the text(s) for language work?

'Culture Shock and Higher Education Performance: Implications for Teaching'

The globalisation of higher education brings together learners and teachers from differing systems, creating a heterogeneous and diverse environment. Yet many higher education institutions typically rely on foreign students themselves to adapt to their new higher education environments. An investigation was undertaken as to whether traditional approaches are effective and efficient in meeting the needs of the internationally mobile student. Using data from the last ten years (1999 to 2009) from a post-1992 University in the North West of England an analysis of over 15,000 postgraduate assessments found a significant performance difference between home country students and international mobile students. Results found that home country students perform significantly better than international students, although the latter perform better in examinations than in coursework. However, there is a substantive improvement during the dissertation stage for both groups. Possible reasons for such variations in performance are explored.

Kelly, P., Moogan, Y. (2012) 'Culture Shock and Higher Education Performance: Implications for Teaching' in *Higher Education Quarterly* Vol. 66/1 , pp. 24-46

Visual long-term memory has a massive storage capacity for object details

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One of the major lessons of memory research has been that human memory is fallible, imprecise, and subject to interference. Thus, although observers can remember thousands of images, it is widely assumed that these memories lack detail. Contrary to this assumption, here we show that long-term memory is capable of storing a massive number of objects with details from the image. Participants viewed pictures of 2,500 objects over the course of 5.5 h. Afterward, they were shown pairs of images and indicated which of the two they had seen. The previously viewed item could be paired with either an object from a novel category, an object of the same basic-level category, or the same object in a different state or pose. Performance in each of these conditions was remarkably high (92%, 88%, and 87%, respectively), suggesting that participants successfully maintained detailed representations of thousands of images. These results have implications for cognitive models, in which capacity limitations impose a primary computational constraint (e.g., models of object recognition), and pose a challenge to neural models of memory storage and retrieval, which must be able to account for such a large and detailed storage capacity.

Practical Task

Text 2

Sample of student writing

What aspects of language would you identify to work on?

How could you address these?

Practical Task**Text 3**

Extract of student work for use as a 'model'

How could you exploit the text for language work?

Method

In this study, a qualitative ethnographic approach is employed for the gathering of data, and as for the analysis of the transcribed conversations and the questionnaire. The qualitative ethnographic approach was developed from work in sociolinguistics (Jacobs, 1987). This method is based on participant observation data and on an audio recording of naturally occurring interactions (Jacobs, 1987). For the purpose of this study, audio recordings and a questionnaire were used as well as physical observation within the classroom. The physical observation will be a Naturalistic observation where by the researcher will go to where the behaviour occurs naturally, in this case, in the classroom (Jacobs, 1987). The questionnaire in particular was used to analyse why learners code switch and how it affects their language learning. The use of audio recording was to capture spontaneous speech patterns and code switching. These methods of data collection were used to provide an in depth view of the language use and their perceptions about code switching. The teachers and learners were informed that their lessons would be recorded for a study of classroom discourse, and that the study was intended to examine the learning process of L2 in normal content based classes, and hence no change should be made in their lessons. Of course, the learners were not informed about the specific aim of the study. Thus, their activities were, possibly, the same as in normal classroom discourse when no observer was present. The study began with the collecting of natural data by conducting recordings in EFL classrooms, then categorizing the data with linguistic features and communicative functions, and finally summarizing the communicative functions of the switching to L1. The process of analysis involves naturalistic, process-oriented observation and can be called a qualitative one. The objective was to enlighten our understanding of code-switching as a specific linguistic and communicative phenomenon. Four classes were audio-recorded over a period of 4 weeks in June, 2011.

Practical Task

Text 4

Extract of student work for use as a 'model'

How could you exploit the text for language work?

2.2 Definition of the concept of autonomy

With the gradual interest of researchers in the concept of autonomy and its consideration in relation to different environmental contexts it became one of those umbrella terms with a broad category of functions and meanings. In other words, its use in relation to different settings in the field of language learning led to a degree of conceptual confusion (Benson, 2001:13). It is necessary, therefore, to explain here what is meant by autonomy in relation to the following study. In theoretical terms, autonomy can be defined as "the freedom and ability to manage one's own affairs, which entails the right to make decisions as well" (Scharle and Szabo, 2000:4). Making decisions on the other hand implies the responsibility which "may also be understood as being in charge of something, but with the implication that one has to deal with the consequences of one's own actions" (Scharle and Szabo, 2000:4). As pointed out by Scharle and Szabo (2000:4), in practice these two terms, autonomy and responsibility are strongly intertwined which makes their differentiation hard. Yet, while Scharle and Szabo talk about responsibility, Benson (2001:47) makes a distinction between 'responsibility', 'charge' and the construct of 'control'. He employs the latter in his definition of autonomy arguing that it seems to be more open to examination compared to the construct of 'charge' and 'responsibility'. Thus as Benson puts it briefly, in the context of language learning autonomy is defined as "the capacity to take control of one's own learning" (2001:47).

Although this definition seems to be very general, a more precise definition is considered unnecessary due to the wide variety of forms that control over learning may take. To put it another way, it has been widely accepted that autonomy is a *multidimensional capacity* that may be visible in a different form from one learner to another as well as from one occasion to another for the same learner depending on the circumstances (Benson, 2001:47).

Practical Task**Text 5**

A Research proposal

How could you exploit the text for language work?

'Doing PBL': An investigation of a spoken corpus of Problem Based Learning sessions within the field of Medical Genetics.

Problem Based Learning (PBL) is now widely used as a means of delivering clinical skills and knowledge in the field of medicine and is becoming increasingly common within other disciplines in higher education. While not without controversy (see, for example, Colliver, 2000), there is a significant body of research investigating its merits and comparing it to more traditional forms of education. Investigations have been conducted in a number of areas, including the acquisition of cognitive skills, (Hmelo, 1998), the development of metacognition (Downing et al, 2008), and on the level of 'deep' learning it promotes (Mok et al, 2009). However there has been less investigation into the linguistic aspects of PBL sessions (PBLs), nor of the (potentially) differing roles and interaction patterns displayed between and by native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) participants. With Internationalisation high on the agenda in British universities and the increasing number of institutions offering both post-graduate and undergraduate degrees through the medium of English (in both English and non-English speaking settings), this research aims to widen our understanding of the language and interaction patterns of PBLs.

At the heart of PBL is the scenario or 'problem', which is used as the basis for discussion, research and the development of knowledge and skills. Participants need to be able to interact effectively, collaborating to co-construct knowledge. This requires the ability to follow and take turns, process and respond to contributions, and summarise ideas in real time. At differing points in the cycle participants engage in longer and shorter turns and with different purposes. For the NNS, there is the additional load of operating in another language and possibly with speakers from different cultural backgrounds (depending on the setting). In terms of oral academic discourse generally, much of the research of academic English has focussed on the presentation or, to an extent, seminars in general. Specific studies into the linguistic aspects of PBLs and in connection to NNS engaging in PBL are relatively limited but include the following. Barron (2002) discusses the differences between PBL in the sciences and Task Based Learning (TBL) in terms of epistemological and ontological differences; Wood & Head (2004) discuss the application of PBL to an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course, commenting on the common ground between the approaches,

going on to discuss how it helps facilitate the development of relevant learning and study skills; Woodward-Kron and Remedios (2007) report on an initial small scale investigation into sequencing and scaffolding, and offer some insights into sequences and the corresponding linguist elements of a PBL tutorial.

The proposed research plans to develop a corpus and focus on the sequencing and functions connected to language used in PBLs. The data would be collected from PBLs in the University of Glasgow and Kaohsiung Medical University, Tawian. There is scope for investigating also the (relative) contributions of NNS and if a corpus including NNS is developed (separately or integrated), a comparison between emerging issues could be considered.

BALEAP TEAP competency framework

An EAP teacher will be able to facilitate students' acquisition of the language, skills and strategies required for studying in a further or higher education context and to support students' understanding of approaches to interpreting and responding to the requirements of academic tasks and their related processes.

Summary of competency statements

Academic practice	an EAP teacher will
Academic contexts	have a reasonable knowledge of the organizational, educational and communicative policies, practices, values and conventions of universities.
Disciplinary differences	be able to recognize and explore disciplinary differences and how they influence the way knowledge is expanded and communicated.
Academic discourse	have a high level of systemic language knowledge including knowledge of discourse analysis.
Personal learning, development and autonomy	recognize the importance of applying to his or her own practice the standards expected of students and other academic staff.
EAP students	an EAP teacher will understand
Student needs	the needs of students in relation to their prior learning experiences and how these might influence their current educational expectations as well as the requirements of the target context that students wish to enter.
Student critical thinking	the role of critical thinking in academic contexts and will employ tasks, processes and interactions that require students to demonstrate critical thinking skills.
Student autonomy	the importance of student autonomy in academic contexts and will employ tasks, processes and interactions that require students to work effectively in groups or independently as appropriate.
Curriculum development	an EAP teacher will understand
Syllabus and programme development	the main types of language syllabus and will be able to transform a syllabus into a programme that addresses students' needs in the academic context within which the EAP course is located.
Text processing and text production	approaches to text classification and discourse analysis and will be able to organize courses, units and tasks around whole texts or text segments in ways that develop students' processing and production of spoken and written texts.
Programme implementation	an EAP teacher will be
Teaching practices	familiar with the methods, practices and techniques of communicative language teaching and be able to locate these within an academic context and relate them to teaching the language and skills required by academic tasks and processes.
Assessment practices	able to assess academic language and skills tasks using formative and summative assessment.

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