

English for Research Publication Purposes: The research grant proposal genre

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The ESP literature on academic writing has witnessed an increasing number of accounts on the issue of 'writing for publication', specifically the scientific research article (RA), following the trend of the internationalisation of universities (Lillis & Curry 2010). In view of this situation, academic writing programs are increasingly targeting English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP). However, Englander (2014) makes the point that the RA is but just one of many different kinds of documents written by scientists. She outlines a chain of interrelated documents accompanying the RA, one of which is the "behind-the-scenes" research grant proposal. As Swales (1990: 178) puts it: 'Published RAs increase the chances of follow-up grants and research grants increase the chances of publishable RAs'. It is therefore important to include instruction of the research grant proposal genre on ERPP courses.

In this presentation I describe the design and delivery of a research grant proposal writing module for science and engineering postgraduate students in which a top-down Swalesian move analysis approach is combined with more bottom-up corpus-based, lexico-grammatical work. I will first briefly provide an overview of the existing research on the genre of proposal writing (see Feng & Shi 2004), which can offer valuable insights for materials design. I will then describe how suitable freely-available corpora and tools can be usefully employed to help students master and extend their range of lexico-grammar for crafting successful research grant proposals. I will also briefly address two aspects which have been raised, but not discussed in any depth in relation to corpus-based pedagogy in postgraduate academic writing, namely the question of language re-use and the English as a lingua franca (ELF) factor.

References

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Biodata

Lynne Flowerdew has worked in the UK, Venezuela, Libya, Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman and Hong Kong. She was a member of the Centre for Language Education at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology for over 20 years and is now an independent scholar. Her main research and teaching interests focus on ESP, corpus linguistics, academic writing and EAP/ESP curriculum design. She has published widely in different areas of corpus linguistics and ESP.