

First, Second, Finally? The Murky Transitions to Academic Language in L2 Writing

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St. Andrews EAP Conference Online 2021

1. What is the language of academic writing?
2. How do learners develop it?

Why do we do this to ourselves?

“dress up the trivial and obvious with the trappings of scientific sophistication” (Pinker, 2014)

This fact has influenced many areas of science, including theories about the plasticity of the young brain, the role of neural maturation in learning, and the modularity of linguistic abilities.
(Hartshorne et al., 2018)

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(Hartshorne, Tenenbaum, & Pinker, 2018)

But ...

- AWL “may involve considerable learning effort with little return” (Hyland & Tse, 2007, p. 236)
- **Variation among disciplines** (Biber & Gray, 2016; Hyland, 1999, 2004)

2. How do learners develop academic written language?

- **Longitudinal studies** (Connor-Linton & Polio, 2014; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998)
- **Most research compares ...**
 - **Student/professional** (e.g., Hyland, 2002; Liardét & Black, 2019)
 - **L1 vs. L2** (Hinkel, 2002, 2003)
 - **Cross-sections** (e.g., Liardét, 2013; Parkinson & Musgrave, 2014)

Methodological assumptions

1. Trajectory is novice > expert
2. Novice writers will improve if they are taught to write like experts

Trajectory of academic SLA

- Increase in academic features from EAP to graduate students to published writing (Parkinson & Musgrave, 2014) and across BAWE levels (Staples et al., 2016)
- Writing with academic features scores higher writing with nonacademic features (Taguchi et al., 2013)
- Choice of clause type develops towards academic norms (Crossley & McNamara, 2014; Lu, 2011)

So where's the evidence of learning?

Pedagogical Implications

- Achugar & Carpenter (2014): summarizing opinions from source texts
- Yasuda (2015): using noun phrases in summaries
- Grammatical metaphor in summaries and paraphrasing (Walsh Marr, 2019; Yasuda, 2015, 2017)
- History argument essays (Pessoa et al., 2017, 2018)

Thank you!

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