

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26469976>

# “Academic Literacy and Communicative Skills in the Ghanaian University: A Proposal.”

Article · January 2007

Source: DOAJ

---

CITATIONS

22

READS

1,235

1 author:



Joseph Benjamin Archibald Afful

University of Cape Coast

24 PUBLICATIONS 157 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



THIS IS USEFUL FOR MY MPHIL SOCIOLINGUISTICS CLASS [View project](#)

## **Academic Literacy and Communicative Skills in the Ghanaian University: A Proposal.**

By Joseph Benjamin Archibald Afful

### **Abstract**

In the last two decades academic literacy has received considerable attention in tertiary education in several English-medium universities. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and similar writing programs have constantly been revised in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia as a result of globalization, the increasing numbers of international students and the dominance of English as an academic language. In contrast, EAP programs in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced very little innovation and change. In this paper, I argue for a change in the curriculum of an EAP program (Communicative Skills) in an English-medium university in Ghana, advancing three key reasons. Such a curriculum, it is argued, should address issues of general and discipline-specific writing, foundation and remediation, and lastly the teaching approach. The paper then concludes with a discussion of some implications worth considering for both theoreticians and implementers of EAP in university education.

**Key words:** *academic literacy, Communicative Skills, curriculum, Ghana, proposal*

### **Introduction**

The link between academic literacy and tertiary education (Lea & Strierer, 2000) is undeniable and has long engaged the attention of educationalists, applied linguists, and other scholars interested in the use of language by students. This has often been discussed by scholars in American, British, and Australian universities in contrast to postcolonial settings which increasingly, though, continue to use English not only in the academic domain but also in business and political spheres as a result of both globalization (Block & Cameron, 2002) and the attendant use of English as an international language. The considerable attention that has been paid to academic literacy worldwide in the last three decades or so derives from the challenges posed by globalization, internationalization, “commodification” of tertiary education, and the increasing prominence given to English language education.

The term ‘academic literacy’ itself conjures all the multifaceted sets of complex skills that are required for a person to function effectively in various disciplinary

communities in a university. Apart from the fact that these skills are required for students to interact effectively with a text (that is, print, visual, digital, or computer-mediated), they are perceived to be critical for high school students entering the university as pre-university institutions are seen to have a culture, practices, and values different from those of universities or tertiary institutions (Alfers & Dison, 2000). A key course that is taught in many English-medium universities to facilitate the acquisition of academic literacy skills is English for Academic Purposes (EAP). In recent times academic literacy has been redefined to encompass a complex set of skills and accomplishments required at 'entry' into tertiary institutions as well as skills required for an advanced learner to make an effective 'departure' from universities (Johns & Swales, 2002) as an independent researcher. This paper focuses on the academic literacy at the entry level (that is, undergraduate) of 'peripheral participation' in a public university in Ghana.

Known in tertiary institutions in Ghana as Communicative Skills (CS), EAP has not witnessed any systematic evaluation as in similar programs elsewhere (e.g. Kinkead & Harris, 1993; Lukmani, 1995; Hyland, 1997). This paper argues for a change in the CS curriculum at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). I focus on UCC as a case study in order to raise concerns that may be applicable to other English-medium universities elsewhere. To accomplish this task, I first describe the general landscape of the teaching of EAP and similar writing programs in English-medium universities. Second, I foreground the teaching of CS at UCC, placing it within the geo-political context of English language education in Ghana. Third, I provide a three-pronged rationale for the proposed change in the CS curriculum and follow it up with the proposed curriculum. The implications of such a proposal are then finally considered.

### **Teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP)**

EAP is literally located in English-medium universities and universities worldwide. Whereas in the USA, it is usually labeled Freshman Composition or General Composition and lately a variant called Writing in the Disciplines, it is often referred to as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in the UK and Canada. EAP in the UK arose in response to the increasing internationalization of tertiary education (Jordan, 2002), while Freshman's Composition and other allied programs in the USA arose as a response to the

obvious decline in the quality of writing of students (Bazerman & Russell, 1994). It may also be argued that given the international character of universities, instituting EAP programs in Africa, Latin America, and Europe is inevitable. Even more cogent as a reason for the widespread institutionalization of EAP programs and similar programs is the increasing role of English as an “academic lingua franca” (Duszak, 1997: 21).

Regardless of the region where EAP or similar writing programs are found, there is one fundamental assumption earlier suggested: writing at pre-university level is deeply different from the writing required at the tertiary level (Coleman, 1998; Alfors & Dison, 2000). As Bock (1983) and others (Martin & Peters, 1985; Drury & Webb, 1997) claim, students from high schools are likely to come to the tertiary level with a baggage of experiences, attitudes, and skills that are not properly suited to university work. EAP, therefore, assumes a preparatory, facilitative, and catalytic role for fresh students, ensuring their smooth transition from pre-university stage to the university level. Unfortunately, this crucial role of EAP is often treated in reductionist and denigratory terms as “remedial”, “study skills”, or “adjunct” in the literature.

Despite this common assumption, writing programs serve different groups of students with different needs in order to equip them to undertake various academic assignments and to participate in activities in the university, if even in a peripheral sense. In British universities, where EAP is traditionally directed towards non-native speakers of English, other skills such as reading, speaking, and listening and study skills are deemed fundamentally crucial. On the other hand, the writing programs in the USA tend to be diverse: Writing in the Disciplines (WID), Writing across the Curriculum (WAC), and the popularization of writing centers. While Composition for Freshman and WID in the USA basically target non-native (and other minority groups residing in the USA) and native speakers of English respectively, writing centers mainly support all students and sometimes members of the communities in which the universities or colleges are located.

One thing though which is common to both the UK and the USA where EAP and General Composition respectively are taught is the changes that have occurred in the last two decades. These have been noted in terms of curricula, methods, technology, and finance (Jordan, 2002). For instance, in the area of curriculum, issues of criticality, plagiarism, and cultural conventions have gained serious attention, as noted in the edited

collection of Flowerdew and Peacock (2001). Additionally, the area of methods of teaching has foregrounded different forms of collaboration in the teaching of EAP and General Composition. Given that most English-medium universities in non-native settings have historical ties with the UK, one would expect their EAP programs to move in similar directions, as briefly outlined above.

Two further issues that provide interesting insights into EAP programs in non-native settings involve the labels by which they are identified and their content. In Singapore, for instance, while most tertiary institutions prefer to use the term *EAP*, or following ESP tradition, terms such as *English for Business* or *English for Engineering*, among others in order to situate the writing program in specific disciplinary contexts, universities in Africa generally use labels such as *Communicative Skills*, *Communication Skills*, or *Use of English*. Many universities in India prefer the term *Communication Skills*; and in Hong Kong, the situation is less clear: while several universities employ *EAP*, a few use *English for Communication Purpose*. These differences in labels implicate differences in the curriculum, pedagogy or even philosophical orientations. For example, in terms of curriculum, most writing programs in African or Indian universities emphasize the written aspect. Singapore on the other hand follows quite strictly the British models by incorporating speaking and listening components to a large extent, while offering a place for learner autonomy.

### **Communicative Skills in a Ghanaian University**

Ghana has had more than three hundred years of contact with three European countries – Portugal, the Netherlands, and the UK. It is, however, the English language that has exerted much influence over Ghana, one of the countries in the world where English is the only official language; besides, it is an important means of inter-ethnic communication internally and a source of communication with the international community – politics, trade, and science.

In terms of education, English is used as a medium of instruction in Ghanaian universities, including the University of Cape Coast (UCC), the setting for this study. A public university established in 1962, UCC conducts its teaching, learning, and research through four faculties (Education, Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences), enabling it

to provide several academic programs to over 15, 000 local and international students. UCC, where I was a student and Faculty member, is selected because of my familiarity with its academic and non-academic members. English, together with Mathematics and Science, remains a major requirement for entry into UCC as in other Ghanaian public universities. In addition, prospective university students in Ghana are expected to have been exposed to 12 years of English from the primary school level to the secondary school level. In addition, on entry into Ghanaian universities, students are required to take CS.

In general, the CS program in UCC is three-pronged, emphasizing remediation, study skills, and writing skills. The curriculum is briefly outlined below:

- Note-taking and note-making (from lectures, textbooks; outlining)
- Reading (skimming, scanning, summarizing, etc)
- Conventions of Usage (spelling, grammar, punctuation, documentation, etc)
- Writing (sentence patterns, clause patterns, paragraphs, types of essays, introduction, body and conclusion).

Related to the CS curriculum are issues such as the teaching staff, allocation of credit hours and writing guides. As a three-credit hour course, CS is taught over two semesters by Faculty members on part-time basis; the teaching staff are not necessarily members of the Department of English. And the first semester is devoted to key study skills and the micro aspects of writing while the macro aspects are taught in the second semester. To facilitate teaching and learning of CS, handouts are provided by the Course Coordinator's office. Materials deemed useful by various instructors and Opoku-Agyeman's (1998) *A handbook for writing skills* are also used. Needless to say, CS is compulsory for all first-year students in UCC, who are required to pass it, lest they be denied a certificate on completion of university education.

The underlying premise of CS as a foundation course is that language skills can be decontextualized from content and that academic language is unvarying across disciplines. Besides, given that the rationale for the CS course, which started in 1985 (personal communication, Gogovi, 2003), was partly to stem the downward trend in the quality of writing of students in various discipline-specific contexts, this focus of the CS at the time was well conceived.

## **The Case for a Change in the CS Curriculum at UCC**

In this section, I argue for a change in the curriculum of CS at UCC based on three key issues: the change in notion of academic literacy, the “commodification” of tertiary education, and a preliminary study conducted among undergraduate students in UCC.

The first fundamental reason for proposing a change in the UCC’s CS curriculum stems from a shift in the notion of academic literacy. The earlier view of academic literacy as a homogeneous, monolithic or univariant set of skills which students are supposed to demonstrate has become a luxury. This acontextual notion presupposed the transferability of a generalizable set of skills and abilities from the EAP classroom to a disciplinary context (Hyland, 2002). Indeed, while it is acknowledged that certain skills are generalizable across all disciplines (Johns, 1997; Sutton, 1997; Kaldor & Rechecouste, 2002), it is overly simplistic to argue that one can transfer the same linguistic structures operative in one disciplinary community to another. The current notion of academic literacy takes cognizance of diversity, multifacetedness, and contextualism (Ballard & Clanchy, 1988; Dillon, 1991; Samraj, 2002). This view of academic literacy, I believe, is potentially acceptable and meaningful to students.

Second is the issue of “commodification” of tertiary education (Becher, 1989; Becher & Trowler, 2001, Block & Cameron, 2002). All over the world the financial support of various governments for tertiary education continues to dwindle. While in the advanced economies such as Australia, this has led to a closer collaboration between industry and universities in the commercialization of research (e.g. Zhao, 2004), in most countries this has often led to confrontations between university students, university lecturers, and non-academic workers on the one hand and governments on the other hand. If students are contributing towards their own education, as is the case at UCC, then the evaluation of the educational product and attendant issues such as accountability and quality assurance need to be addressed. Such reconfiguration or recontextualization of education (and for that matter curricula) as a commodity implies the need for the service providers (university authorities, government, or other stakeholders) to regularly evaluate their curricula, including CS, to make it functional to society’s needs. Moreover, many stakeholders in university education in Ghana have questioned the products that are being

turned from the country's universities, especially in their communication skills at workplace.

The final reason for advocating a change in the curriculum is the report of findings from a study that forms part of a wider study (Afful, 2005) exploring the interface between rhetoric and disciplinary variation (focusing on three departments). Views of students and faculty from departments of English, Sociology, and Zoology regarding their writing and CS were obtained. While some Faculty members felt that CS was useful and that students themselves were not appropriating it partly because Faculty members were not reinforcing the skills learnt, other Faculty members questioned its usefulness. Indeed, some other members even suggested that CS be replaced with Writing Centers, modeled after those in universities in the USA. On the other hand, most students felt that CS was useful although they were of the view that the program has to be restructured in terms of curriculum, teaching staff, and duration. While it is not claimed that the views obtained from the above study are representative, it suggests the need for a systematic evaluation of the current CS course.

### **The Proposed Curriculum**

The proposed change in the CS curriculum takes into account three issues: a) foundational or remedial ramification (b) a balance between general writing needs and specific writing needs, and c) pedagogical approach.

#### *Foundational or Remedial*

The question of CS as a foundational or remedial course is crucial in tertiary education in Ghana and other countries. The foundational stance seeks to present CS as an empowering device to enable students to function effectively in the university community in terms of their ability to perform various academic tasks. In contrast, the remedial perspective, from a deficit viewpoint, seeks to deal with the language deficiencies of students. My initial stance would have been an outright rejection of the remedial aspect of CS, while declaring an unquestioned preference of the foundational dimension. However, on hindsight I realize that a pragmatic stance will be to embrace fully the foundational viewpoint, while taking cognizance of the remediation and study



skills aspects. In other words, I advocate an unequivocal emphasis on the foundational while recognizing that the benefits to both the undergraduate students in their later university work and their discipline-specific teachers would be better enhanced, if attempts are made to get students to improve on their study and language skills.

There are two key reasons that call for continuing emphasis on the foundational aspect of the CS curriculum. The first concerns the fact that university work, as pointed out earlier, is different from high school work and requires some general as well as specific skills. In my own experience in teaching EAP in both Ghana and recently South Africa, first year undergraduates find university culture 'strange', 'weird', and 'difficult'. It is necessary, therefore, for fresh students to be helped to appreciate and adapt to this so-called 'weird' culture. Concerning this issue, Kapp (1994: 114), while admitting the context-dependent nature of academic discourse, opines:

... there are many features such as the practice of critiquing one's assumptions, arguing with detachment...posing questions, providing evidence and referencing, engaging in processes of selection and organization which are indeed across the disciplines

The second issue has to do with language skills, often highlighted in the remedial aspect of most EAP programs. The role of language in reflecting and constituting epistemology is not in question; language is inextricably intertwined with the epistemology of a discipline. In fact, it is now being argued that EAP (here, CS) should be a course of language (Turner, 2004). As well, in Ghana there is a wide gap between the rich and the poor, the result being that children of the rich have access to well-endowed high schools while children of the poor often attend the less-endowed schools (Oteng, 2000). CS in tertiary institutions in Ghana thus could be seen as a leveler, in respect of its potential in assisting a greater number of students to acquire the relevant language skills needed for university work.

#### *General Writing and Discipline-Specific Writing Needs*

A further crucial point to note in the proposed CS curriculum is the need to achieve a cautious balance between generalist (Johns, 1997; Jordan, 1997) and discipline-specific (Dillon, 1991; MacDonald, 1994) requirements in tertiary literacy to meet practical considerations. A number of studies conducted by scholars such as Linton *et al*

(1994) Sutton, (1997), and Hyland (2002), have taken the lead in showing that this apparent tension is resolvable.

Following from the work of Linton *et al.* (1994), Johns (1997), and Kaldor & Rochecouste (2002), the proposed CS curriculum can draw on the general features of academic discourse to direct students to a more independent study and awareness of discipline-specific features in their various departments. Linton *et al.*'s exposition is by far the most succinct and insightful, alluding to generic features such as content, structure, and language use. For instance, in the proposed CS curriculum, content can be examined as a generic feature of all disciplines; disciplines revolve around certain salient phenomena in the construction of knowledge. At the same time, these phenomena can be used as the basis to distinguish disciplines. Content can be used in the CS class to distinguish Chemistry and History: for instance, Chemistry takes non-living organisms as the object of its inquiry while History takes human beings or human-centered events for the same purpose.

Similarly, structure can also be highlighted as a generic feature in a CS program to prepare students for their disciplinary communities. This generalist perspective of structure could draw students' attention to fundamental issues such as (a) organizational features (b) genres (both spoken and written) utilizable in the university and (c) conventions of usage. Concerning organizational features, it is possible that most first-year students at UCC are familiar with rhetorical modes such as description, narration, expository, comparison, and argumentation from their pre-university days. A study of the EAP program in the University of the Witwatersrand, a leading South African university, reveals that students' attention can be drawn to argumentation as the valued form of writing in academia, while helping them to see how it differs from other forms. It is possible that some students may not have had a firm grasp of cohesion and coherence in their high schools. Providing students, therefore, with such knowledge and the varied ways in which these organizational aspects are utilized in various disciplines could be revealing and empowering to them.

Further, introducing fresh students to the concept of academic genres, whether spoken or written, can be useful. For written genres, discussions can focus on the title, abstract, literature review, book review, long essay or dissertation, course paper, term

paper; discussion on spoken academic genres could include seminar, presentation, tutorial, conferencing, and workshop. Students can be led to discover spoken academic genres by directing them to the MICASE project in Michigan University devoted to research and description of various spoken academic genres, which can be easily assessed on the internet, given the improved student accessibility to the internet at UCC. At the outset, it is necessary to point out that the essence of introducing the concept of genres in the proposed CS curriculum is not to teach fresh undergraduates these genres as rather to alert them to the possibility of their encountering them as they move horizontally and vertically in the university. Of course, the extent to which specific spoken and written genres are used will depend on various disciplinary communities.

In addition, depending on how structure or form is conceived, the proposed CS curriculum could convey useful information on conventions of usage such as references/bibliography, citation, spelling, and punctuation. In particular, the underlying rationale for bibliography and citation as means of enforcing shared construction of knowledge, ownership, and deterring plagiarism could be a useful general point, while drawing attention to differences in disciplines or even lecturer preferences regarding APA, MLA, or Chicago house styles. Moreover, Lynch and McGrath's (1993) exposition on the five features of effective bibliographic build-up could be an illuminating basis of introducing students to bibliographic documentation, a skill required in later years of the undergraduate student's academic work in the university.

Apart from content and structure, language offers an illuminating basis for incorporating generalist and discipline-specific perspectives in a revised CS curriculum in UCC. Linguistic and rhetorical features that are generally utilized by academic discourse include the following: formality (detachment versus writer's voice); citations; linear development; lexical, collocational, and phraseological features; hedging, and information management. Within the broad category of linguistic features, the CS curriculum can focus on, for instance, formality as it is conveyed through the personal pronoun "I" and lexical features such as reporting verbs. The use of the personal pronoun "I" can be an interesting issue for discussion, given the numerous discourse analytic studies on it (Chang & Swales, 1999; Tang & John, 1999). Rather than being prescriptive, insights from these studies can indicate to students the extent to which the

personal pronoun “I” can be used and within which sections in a piece of genre it can be effectively deployed.

Also, an important element in academic discourse is reporting verbs such as “argue”, “suggest”, “claim”, and “report”. To equip fresh students with this general knowledge of reporting verbs, a more useful strategy will be to lead them to understand the underlying force of claim of such verbs. This necessitates a semantic analysis of these reporting verbs on either a cline of positivity and negativity or a cline of weakness and strength. Once students grasp these two fundamental points – occurrence and semanticity – concerning reporting verbs, the issue of discipline-specificity can more easily be dealt with. Exercises that require students to find out what reporting verbs are used in their individual subjects as well as how they are used may be incorporated into the CS program.

### *Pedagogical Approach*

The last issue concerns the approach in teaching the proposed CS curriculum. This can be seen from three inter-related perspectives: the skills-based approach, the theme-based approach, generalist-based/discipline-specific based/ interactive teaching.

A skills-based approach first conjures reading, listening, writing, and speaking. An integrative and holistic approach involving these four skills will be useful to students rather than an approach that is isolationist. Of course, by talking about an integrative approach, I do not ask for equal attention for these four skills, as this may not be practicable. The point is that the current CS curriculum at UCC places far more emphasis on writing and reading. The result is that oral communication is hugely marginalized. In this proposal, I suggest a more serious view of oral communication together with listening if all students are to be assisted in their discipline-specific courses. Students need to be given opportunities to engage in spoken discourse in CS classes, granted that class sizes are small.

By drawing on recent research on listening (e.g. Flowerdew, 1994; Rost, 2002) the proposed CS program can introduce students generally to various forms of listening (e.g. deliberative, interactive, and aesthetic), depending on the forms of academic discourse involved. It must be noted that this approach can be meaningful only when

students are made aware of the various forms of speaking (e.g. impromptu, extempore, scripted, and dialogic) or speech events (e.g. lecture, presentations, seminar, academic advise/academic counseling session) that they are likely to encounter in both their horizontal and vertical movement at the university. Here again, drawing on data from the MICASE project, the envisaged CS curriculum can be enhanced greatly as the spoken academic genres can be systematically and sufficiently explicated.

The theme-based approach can complement the skill-based approach. In one sense, reference to the theme-based approach has already been made in earlier sections such as the exposition on content, structure, and language use. Another way is to consider the topics that are treated in class. Given the usual complaint of the difficulty of students in appropriating academic discourse, there is need to exercise caution in the selection of passages meant to highlight various aspects of academic writing. In post-apartheid South Africa, for instance, passages that are chosen in EAP programs reflect national issues such as HIV/AIDS, diversity of races, equality, and violence. This has the advantage of holding the attention of students and facilitating their understanding of pertinent issues in academic writing. Similarly, a theme-based approach in the proposed CS in UCC can draw on the socio-cultural and historical circumstances of Ghana to select passages that deal with ethnicity, language and gender, as well as sports.

The third, and last, issue to consider under teaching approach concerns the relationship between discipline-specific teachers and academic literacy teachers regarding students' acquisition of the epistemology and rhetoric in their respective disciplines. The literature on academic literacy identifies three forms. The first is team teaching often credited to Dudley-Evans (1995, 2001) and others such as Jones (2004). Here, both the discipline-specific teacher and the academic literacy teacher collaborate in teaching various aspects of writing valued and privileged in specific disciplines. For instance, in a Psychology class, the discipline-specific teacher can focus on the writing of cases, while the academic literacy teacher focuses on the effective use of passive constructions or other aspects of formal language. Another approach advocated by scholars such as Johns (1992) and Zhu (2004) suggests the centrality of the discipline-specific teachers in EAP courses. Such a position is in consonance with an earlier study conducted in University of Ghana, in which Adika and Owusu-Sekyere (1997) suggested a greater role for the

discipline-specific teacher in students' enculturation in a department-based writing program, which was to replace a general academic writing program

In this paper, I advocate a third approach, which I consider more pragmatic, given the logistical and human resource constraints that inhere in the earlier two approaches. This approach resonates with Carter's (1990) interactive approach that marries the generalist writing approach and the discipline-specific approach. It, however, maintains the centrality of CS instructors, demanding that by virtue of his/her training s/he draws on research on undergraduate writing in, for instance, Geography (Hewings, 2002), Biology (Chimbganda, 2000; Drury, 2001), Philosophy (Geisler, 1994), Dentistry (Lawe-Davies, 1998), History (Coffin, 2002, 2004), and Sociology (Starfield, 2004). Like Johns (1992), I am of the view that the effort of the CS instructor has to be complemented by the subject teacher in the discipline-specific context. Such a caveat is not without basis because, as North (2003), for instance, argues, if disciplinary skills are learnt through participation in a situated activity within a disciplinary course, then it would appear to be difficult to see how CS can foster this. In this light, the approach proposed here should eventually give way to the more central role envisaged for the discipline-specific teacher in the second approach once UCC is ready to provide the necessary logistics.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

In this paper, I have sketched the landscape of EAP courses in the native and non-native settings, focusing on the teaching of a similar program (CS) in a Ghanaian university. The thrust of the paper is a proposed change in the CS curriculum at University of Cape Coast, from three perspectives. Suggestions have been made regarding content and pedagogy.

There are theoretical and practical implications that emerge from this proposal. In terms of theory, I have argued that a proposal for a change in the CS curriculum of University of Cape Coast derives from the current theory of academic literacy, which foregrounds a multivariate position. This multivariate view flags multiliteracies, discipline-specificity, and context. (Jolliffe & Brier, 1988; Prior, 1998; Hyland, 2002), arguing for the inextricable link between language and content. That is, content makes a significant contribution in how discourse differs from one discipline to another. As this

monistic view of academic literacy is currently driving the gradual changes in most EAP programs all over the world, Africa stands the risk of being marginalized if its EAP curricula are not systematically evaluated and subsequently redesigned.

Such a theoretical imperative in turn implicates practical considerations. These include staff training or refreshment courses as well as innovation in curriculum, institutional capacity and pedagogy. Indeed, a major requirement for the successful implementation of the proposal being advocated here involves a retraining of staff of CS. In Ghana, where CS staff are not only English or Linguistics lecturers but other faculty, this could be Herculean. In the short term, without disrupting the CS program, a refreshment course that flags academic literacy as a multivariate set of accomplishments and skills should be offered to CS staff. In the long term, however, the English Departments in African countries and other nonnative settings could incorporate courses such as Writing in the Disciplines, English for Academic Purposes, Academic Writing, Rhetoric and Composition, Discourse Analysis, and Theory and Practice of Writing in their postgraduate programs. Postgraduate students from these programs could then in future be counted upon to fill the positions being occupied currently by other Faculty members with no specialization in English or Applied Linguistics.

Additionally, with the continuing dwindling financial resources of most universities, especially in Africa, the implementation of the proposed change in CS curriculum rests largely on the institutional capacity of the universities. There is need for African universities to reassess their mission statements or goals and to reflect on how far these goals are in tandem with their curricular goals. If indeed universities are to be seen as social partners and in economic terms 'sites of marketization' in the provision of quality life, then this proposal should be taken as a challenge.

## **References**

- Adika, G. S. K., & Owusu-Sekyere, G. (1997). "Standards of English in the University of Ghana and a proposal for department-based writing programs". *Working Papers in Language Teaching* 1, 1-3. Legon: Language Centre.
- Afful, J.B.A. (2005). *A rhetorical analysis of examination essays in three disciplines: The case of Ghanaian undergraduate students*. Unpublished PhD

thesis. National University of Singapore.

- Alfers, H. & Dison, A. (2000). Tracking students through the system: An investigation into EAP students' progress at Rhodes University. *Proceedings of the SAALA 2000 conference* vol 1: 1-10
- Bazerman, C. & Russell, D. (eds.) (1994). *Landmark essays on writing across the curriculum*. Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.
- Becher, T (1989). *Academic Tribes and territories: Intellectual inquiry and the cultures of disciplines*. Milton Keynes: SRHE/OUP.
- Becher, T & Trowler, P.R. (2001). 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. *Academic tribes and territories*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: SRHE and OUP.
- Block, D. & Cameron, D. (eds.) (2002). *Globalization and language teaching*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Boch, H. (1993). "What are remedial problems? – A tentative analysis". In C. Webb & H. Drury (eds.). *The communication needs of tertiary level students*. Proceedings of the Australian Tertiary Study Skills Conference. The University of Sydney.
- Carter, M. (1990). "The idea of expertise: An exploration of cognition and social dimensions of writing". *College Composition and Communication* 41 (3): 265-286.
- Chang, Y. -Y., & Swales, J. (1999). "Informal elements in English academic writing: threats or opportunities for advanced non-native speakers?" In C.N. Candlin & K. Hyland (eds.), *Writing: Texts, processes and practices* (pp. 145-167). London: Longman.
- Chimbganda, A.B. (2000). "Communication strategies used in the writing of answers in biology by ESL first year science students of the University of Botswana". *English for Specific Purposes* 19 (4): 305-329.
- Coffin, C. (2002). "The voices of history: Theorizing the interpersonal semantics of historical discourses". *Text* 22 (4): 503-528.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2004). "Learning to write history". *Written Communication* 21 (3): 261-289.
- Dillon, G. (1991). *Contending rhetorics: Writing in academic disciplines*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.



- Drury, H. (2001). "Short answers in first-year undergraduate science writing. What kind of genres are they?" In M. Hewings (ed.), *Academic writing in context: Implications and applications. Papers in honor of Tony Dudley-Evans* (pp. 104-121). Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press.
- Drury, H. & Webb, C. (1991). "Literacy at tertiary level: making explicit writing". In F. Christies (ed.). *Literacy in social processes*. Papers from the inaugural Australian Systemic Functional Linguistic Conference held at Deakin University, January, 1990. Centre for Studies of Language in Education Northern Territory University, Darwin.
- Dudley-Evans, T. (1995). "Common core and specific approaches to the teaching of academic writing?". In D. Belcher, & G. Braine (eds.), *Academic writing in a second language: Essays on research and pedagogy* (pp. 298-312). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2001). "Team-teaching in EAP: Changes and adaptations in the Birmingham approach". In J. Flowerdew and M. Peacock (eds.), *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes* (pp. 225-239). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duszak, A. (ed.). (1997). *Culture and styles of academic discourse*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Flowerdew, J. (ed.) (1994). *Academic listening: Research perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Flowerdew, J. & Peacock, M. (eds.). (2001). *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Geisler, C. (1994). *Academic literacy and the nature of expertise: Reading, writing, and knowing in academic philosophy*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hewings, A. (1999). *Disciplinary engagement in undergraduate writing: an investigation of clause-initial elements in geography essays*. Unpublished PhD thesis. School of Humanities, Department of English: The University of Birmingham.
- Hyland, K. (1997). "Is EAP necessary?" A survey of Hong Kong undergraduates. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching* 7: 77-99
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2002). "Specificity revisited: how far should we go now?" *English for Specific Purposes* 21: 385-395.
- Johns, A. M. (1992). "Academic English: What can we do?" *Journal of Intensive English Studies* 6: 61-69.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1997). *Text, role and context: Developing academic literacies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johns, A. M., & Swales, J. M. (2002). "Literacy and disciplinary practices: Opening and closing perspectives". *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 1 (1): 13-28.
- Jolliffe, D. A., & Brier, E. M. (1988). "Studying writers' knowledge in academic Disciplines". In D. A. Jolliffe (ed.), *Advances in writing research: Writing in academic disciplines* (pp. 35-88). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Jones, J. (2004). "Learning to write in the disciplines: The application of systemic functional linguistic theory to the teaching and research of student writing". In L. J. Ravelli, & R. A. Ellis (eds.), *Analyzing academic writing: Contextualized Frameworks* (pp. 254-273). London/New York: Continuum.
- Jordan, R.R. (1997). *English for academic purposes: A guide and resource book for teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2002). "The growth of EAP in Britain". *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 1 (1): 69-78.
- Kaldor, S. & Rochecouste, J. (2002). "General academic writing and discipline specific academic writing". *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 25 (2): 29-47.
- Kapp, R. (1994). "English for Academic Purposes: Defining the role of a General Academic Literacy Course". In S. Angelil-Carter, D. Bond, M. Paxton, L. Thesen (eds.) *Language in Academic Development at UCT*.
- Kinhead, J. A. & Harris, J.G. (1993). *Writing centers in context: Twelve case studies*. Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Lawe-Davies, R. (1998). *Coherence in tertiary student writing: Writers' skills and readers' expectations*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Australia.
- Lea, M.R. & Stierer (eds.) (2000). *Student Writing in Higher Education: New Contexts*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Linton, P., Madigan, R. & Johnson, S. (1994). "Introducing students to disciplinary genres: The role of the General Composition course". *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines* 1(2): 63-78.

- Lukmani, Y (1995). "Evaluation of a mainstream innovative language skills course". In Agnitotri, R.K. & A.L. Khanna (eds.). *English Language Teaching in India: Issues and innovations*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Lynch, T. & McGrath, I. (1993). "Teaching bibliographic documentation skills". *English for Specific Purposes* 12: 219-238.
- MacDonald, S.P. (1994). *Professional academic writing in the humanities and social sciences*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Martin, J.R. & Peters, P. (1985). "On the analysis of exposition". In R. Hasan (ed.). *Discourse on Discourse*, ALAA Occasional Papers, No 7.
- North, S.P. (2003). *Emergent disciplinarity in an interdisciplinary course: Theme use in the history of science*. Unpublished PhD thesis The Open University, UK.
- Opoku-Agyemang, N. J. (1998). *A handbook for writing skills*. Accra: Universities of Ghana Press.
- Oteng, M. (2000). "Bridging the rural urban education gap: Some proposals". <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHome Page/> . Retrieved on 8/30/2004
- Rost, M. (2002). *Teaching and researching listening*. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Samraj, B. (2002). "Texts and contextual layers: academic writing in content courses". In A. Johns (ed.). *Genre in the classroom: multiple perspectives* (pp 163-176). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Starfield, S. (2004). "Word power: Negotiating success in a first-year Sociology essay". In L. J. Ravelli & R.A. Ellis (eds.), *Analyzing academic writing: Contextualized Framework* (pp. 66-83). London/New York: Continuum.
- Sutton, B. (1997). "Writing in the disciplines, first-year composition, and the research Paper". *Language and Learning across the Disciplines* 2 (1): 46-57.
- Tang, R. & John, S. (1999). "The 'I' in identity: exploring writer identity in student academic writing through the first person pronoun". *English for Specific Purposes* 18 (1): 23-39.
- Turner, J. (2004). "Language as academic purpose". *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 3: 95-109.
- Zhao, F. (2004). "Commercialization of research: A case of Australian universities". *Higher Education Research & Development* 23 (2): 223-236.
- Zhu, W. (2004). "Faculty views on the importance of writing, the nature of academic

writing, and teaching and responding to writing in the disciplines”. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13: 29-48