

From Academic Literacies to International Publishing: The Postgraduates' Road Map

Cristina Pennarola¹

¹ Department of Political Science, University of Napoli Federico II, Napoli, Italy

Correspondence: Cristina Pennarola, Department of Political Science, University of Napoli Federico II, Via Leopoldo Rodinò 22, Napoli, 80138, Italy.

Received: October 3, 2022 Accepted: December 15, 2022 Online Published: December 26, 2022

doi:10.5539/ijel.v13n1p95 URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v13n1p95>

Abstract

Normative approaches to academic writing have mostly focused on the linguistic and discursive aspects of student writing, from text organization and lexicogrammatical correctness to cohesion, coherence and style. In contrast, the academic literacies approach regards writing not simply as a set of skills but as a significant part of the students' learning process that enables them to develop their own voice, in opposition to well-established academic conventions and institutional constraints. The present paper outlines the old and new directions of the academic literacies agenda in relation to English-medium academic publishing, and explores some of the aspects that could be prioritized to give equal opportunities for publication to junior researchers based in Italy. In particular, the reflective assignments of the postgraduate students at the University of Napoli Federico II and a doctoral students' survey on writing for research publication were used to investigate their major concerns over practical and ideological issues. The findings also suggest a way of providing novice researchers with a rewarding writing experience throughout their academic careers.

Keywords: academic literacies, English for Research Publication Purposes, academic writing, novice researchers, gatekeepers

1. Introduction

Given the prominence of written texts in academia and the prestige associated with permanent records of cognitive endeavours and knowledge-making practices (Canagarajah, 2002), one of the aspects most widely investigated in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is writing (Hyland & Jiang, 2021). Many aspects of academic writing have been investigated especially to help students develop the confidence necessary to feel part of the academic community, sharing its ethos and varying epistemologies (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). The analysis of language and the wider communicative context has provided fresh insights into academic discourse, calling into play the academic community/ies, their conventions, genres and procedural moves (Swales, 1990), as well as their social and epistemological domains and boundaries (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Considering that tacit disciplinary conventions and institutional constraints can hinder students' creativity and flatten their voice (i.e., personalities, cultural backgrounds, beliefs and aspirations), a holistic and self-empowering approach to student writing has been advocated, generally known as academic literacies. Other labels, such as Critical Literacies, Advanced Critical Literacy or Critical English for Academic Purposes, have also been used to refer to the demystifying practices used in the classroom to redress the imbalance of power between higher and lower-status members of academia. However, the academic literacies framework, stemming from the seminal work by Brian Street (1995) and Mary Lea (Lea & Street, 1998), is more widely known and seems to me more comprehensive as it encompasses many different practices and forms of interaction at university.

This paper is aimed at outlining the old and new directions of the academic literacies agenda and also sketching out its practical applications in relation to English for Research Publication Purposes, looming large in the academic system of quality control and rewards the world over. As any new direction is the result of endless negotiations between different stakeholders, the responses of the postgraduate students attending my academic writing courses at the University of Napoli Federico II over the last two years were used to integrate the broad overview of the academic literacies with a more practical approach aimed at identifying the postgraduates' concerns over academic writing and publishing.

2. An Overview of Academic Literacies

Literacy is a fundamental concept in any educational context, defining and shaping many of the classroom pedagogies aimed at developing students' reading and writing skills and helping them achieve proficiency in the classroom as well as in everyday life (Muthwii, 2004). In particular, the expression "academic literacies" points to plural, context-based and purpose-driven writing practices, since "[p]eople read and write religious texts differently than they do legal ones and differently again than they do biology texts or texts in popular culture" (Gee, 2015, p. 36). Taking account of the socially situated nature of every text production entails a series of game-changing consequences that affect all the participants in the educational process: namely, they become more aware of ideology, that is the underlying principles and values associated with the act of writing, and they also develop deeper insights into its culture-bound nature, i.e., how disciplinary communities define, structure, and assess forms of writing. In place of a singular literacy, which suggests a stable and all-encompassing competence, we are by now quite familiar with juggling many forms of academic literacies, discipline-based, self-empowering, and technologically driven.

What distinguishes academic literacies from other approaches to writing is the attention placed on the students' role within academia and how they can (and should) make sense of written assignments and negotiate their position as legitimate members of the academic community, entitled to their own viewpoints and stylistic preferences. While normative approaches to academic writing have mostly focused on several aspects of the student writing process from text organization and lexicogrammatical correctness to cohesion, coherence and style, the academic literacies approach considers writing not simply as a set of skills but as a significant part of the student's learning process, "without making any prior assumptions as to which practices are either appropriate or effective" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158).

Academic literacies draw upon the view of educational practices as socially situated, at the interface between the students' desiderata and the institution's requirements. Compared to the academic socialization model, with its emphasis on discipline-based learning and the development of the "tools of the trade", i.e. the students' study strategies and resources, this approach challenges the hierarchical system of academic power by encouraging students to develop their own voice, in opposition to academic conventions and institutional constraints in general (Lea & Street, 1998). Against the backdrop of highly conventional and routinized forms of student assessment, where the criteria adopted, for example, clarity and argumentation, are hardly ever defined as if they were self-evident and universally valid (Lillis, 2000), the academic literacies approach is aimed at empowering students to find their own voice and adapt the learning process to their personal agenda, as shown by many classroom experiences featuring students with English as their first or second language. Taking the cue from the tutors' sensitive questioning, students clarify their ideas and manage to develop a personalized trajectory for their coursework within a variety of disciplines and educational contexts: whether in a South African engineering programme, struggling to integrate their assignments with knowledge about their local reality as an acceptable academic source (Archer, 2008), or in a photojournalism course trying to come to terms with compulsory theoretical readings through drawing and visual metaphors (Good, 2015), or in yet other educational surroundings marked by the learning/assessment polarity, students appear to strongly benefit from the flexible approach adopted by their tutors and by their own co-construction of their assignments and learning pathways (Jones, Turner, & Street, 2000; Lillis, Harrington, Lea, & Mitchell, 2015).

As a consequence, academic literacies has earned a strong reputation for fostering criticality and developing a transformative agenda for its practitioners at whatever stage of their academic career: what is considered the norm in an essay or research article in terms of argumentation and author stance can be renegotiated or even called into question by students and researchers alike (Clark & Ivanic, 1997; see Swales, 2017 for a captivating revisitation of academic genres *à la carte*). Another favourite theme concerns academic socialization given the special attention that academic literacies practitioners dedicate to students and their conflicting relationship with academia, torn as they are between desire and (self)distrust. Not just the students receive attention and care, also other participants in need of support become the privileged interlocutors of academic literacies teacher-researchers: for example, other teachers struggling under the unfair distribution of academic work and burdened by students' emotional and cognitive demands (Tuck, 2018); tutors usually relegated to the role of "language fixers", who can instead promote awareness of "societal linguistic discrimination" in their students (Helmer, 2013, p. 281); trans scholars and activists usually marginalized in academia and claiming visibility through fair citation practices (Thieme & Saunders, 2018).

Although the picture drawn so far is extremely positive as it points to the numerous practical applications and to a general feeling of self-empowerment gained by the participants (students and researchers alike), some issues still need to be tackled.

a) What standards?

As the accepted norm comes to be renegotiated and questioned in the dialogic and non-hierarchical format favoured by academic literacy practitioners, the new standards arising can appear either sloppy or casual, affected by unpredictable factors such as students' and lecturers' personalities as well the politics of tolerance and support stretching the boundaries of institutional requirements (Ding & Bruce, 2017). The identification of appropriate standards is made even more urgent and problematic by the assessment-oriented attitude of many students usually more interested in a recipe for academic success than in challenging writing conventions (Wingate, 2012).

b) What pedagogies?

Given the attention placed on the participants' agentic role in constructing their learning experience through their writing, a variety of student-centred methods including reflective journals, free writing, and drawing has been deployed depending on the situational context and aims. It has been suggested that ethnographic instruments such as interviews and questionnaires, on which the academic literacies framework is heavily reliant, should be integrated with a more fine-grained text analysis exemplifying and highlighting language and discourses features of scholarly texts in order to raise the students' awareness of academic style (Coffin & Donohue, 2012; Gardner, 2012; Wingate & Tribble, 2012).

c) what literacies?

Although the vast majority of writing tasks and assignment comes from traditional academic genres ranging from essays to reports to case studies, dissertations and reviews, an increasingly large portion of students' work is now based on Internet sources such as blogs, forums, repositories, web pages and the like. Analysing the multimodal and shifting literacies afforded by digital technologies proves necessary to gain insights into student learning and the construction of knowledge in the digital age (Dahmash, 2021; Lea & Jones, 2011).

3. Writing for Publication

In light of the growing concern over writing for publication, it seems worthwhile to relate the academic literacies framework to English for Research Publication Purposes, a new strand of EAP research into the linguistic, sociopolitical and cultural dynamics at work in the global publishing arena (Flowerdew, 2015). This area of research is particularly controversial given the high stakes associated with international publishing in terms of material and symbolic reward, i.e., funding, promotion, and prestige, and also considering the stringent and oppressive regime of university research assessment the world over, which often seems to condemn scholars to a relentless quest for English-based publication (Billig, 2013; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Hyland, 2015). Considerable debate has taken place concerning the difficulties faced by speakers of English as an additional language (EAL) when preparing their research papers in English and dealing with the editors' and reviewers' bias (Belcher, 2007; Uzuner, 2008). However, as suggested by Swales (2004) and other scholars (Hyland, 2016; Tribble, 2017), the problem for EAL writers appears to lie not so much in their possibly inadequate English language proficiency but in their lack of experience in "rhetorical and procedural competencies" (Swales, 2004, p. 57).

This point is further elaborated by Canagarajah (2002): in his geopolitical account of academic writing, he points out that in addition to the lack of resources, (i.e., technological equipment, library facilities and even adequate pay), the periphery scholars' research is affected by their different conventions in knowledge construction, as it does not comply with the standard of western-based scientific thinking (Note 1). For example, the typical structure IMRD (Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion), which to a western-based scholar would appear the natural and logical way of presenting data, does not match the personal and aesthetic narratives of periphery scholars and their preference for addressing a wide audience rather than the restricted target of their specialist colleagues (see also Mauranen, 1993 for a similar account of a rhetorical clash between English and Finnish economics texts). Moreover, while western-based research articles self-legitimate their claims to the construction of knowledge by indicating a gap in the literature and emphasizing their findings and rigorous procedures against the backdrop of their predecessors, periphery scholars tend to adopt a more harmonious and self-effacing stance in line with the humility ethos derived from Hindu religious thinking (Canagarajah, 2002).

As argued by Canagarajah, then, dominant literacy practices in academia do more than shape the writer's identity, they contribute to construct knowledge mostly according to a western-based model and end up perpetuating the unequal distribution of power and resources between western societies and the rest of the world. Although Italian researchers share the western paradigm of knowledge construction, they can often be disadvantaged by their status as EAL users when they have to use English for conference presentations and publications. Below are some ideas that could be implemented to facilitate EAL scholars' access to international journals and, more importantly, to foster a fruitful exchange of ideas and practices among scholars from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds,

and at different stages in their careers.

a) *Networking*

In contrast to an individualized view of writers as solely responsible for the written product of their thinking, academic literacies regard the act of writing as a “networked activity” (Lillis & Tuck, 2016, p. 38) and underline the important role that colleagues, senior scholars and reviewers – referred to as literacy brokers by Lillis and Curry (2010, p. 22) – play out in shaping the final text. In practice, scholars relying on solid interpersonal and professional connections are more likely to participate in research projects and have their work published in international journals. Professional groups and associations can offer valuable opportunities to engage with colleagues from other institutions and start collaborative research projects hopefully conducive to international publishing.

b) *Dialogic interaction*

In accordance with the guiding principle that “the construction of knowledge is a dialogic process” (Lea, 2004, p. 747), scholars and editorial staff can use questionnaires, emails, and computer conferencing to compare their different ways of conceiving research and advancing knowledge. However difficult it may be to transport the nurturing relationship between student and tutor to a delocalised setting such as the editorial office of a journal, a genuine belief that both parties are to gain from this exchange can give the necessary impetus to the initiative.

c) *Analysing texts and contexts*

Although the preferred academic literacies approach is based on “talk around text”, or the ethnographic information provided by writers about the circumstances and trajectories of their writing (Lillis & Curry, 2018), genre, discourse and corpus-based analysis can also contribute valuable insights into how meanings are constructed and power relations reflected in a text, especially according to an integrated approach taking into account readers’ questions and criticism (Wingate & Tribble, 2012). The analysis of written feedback on students’ assignments can help transform relationships of authority into a more equal dialogic exchange where students are allowed to challenge their tutors and adopt “alternate modes of argumentation and reasoning” (Canagarajah, 2002, p. 296); likewise, a close reading of reviews and editors’ letters could help foreground some of their hidden functions (see Caplan, 2019) with a view to demystifying and subverting the asymmetrical relationships they convey, or “making visible ideologies of text production and evaluation systems” (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 161).

4. The Postgraduates’ Views on Academic Writing

This section reports on my academic writing lessons from September 2020 to May 2022 at the University of Napoli Federico II and aimed at several cohorts of postgraduate students specializing in different disciplines (politics, management, psychology, gender studies, linguistics). By taking into consideration the liberating academic literacies framework and the students’ need to pass strict assessment criteria for publication and academic success, I have set out two objectives for my courses on academic writing, i.e., develop the students’ confidence first as novice members of the academic community and secondly as competent writers of essays, research projects and articles.

4.1 The Academic Writer’s Positioning

To reach the first objective I tried to set up a positive and non-threatening classroom atmosphere where every aspect of the coursework and assessment was open to discussion and negotiation. The students were encouraged to share their expectations about the course and contribute with their views, such as the topics they wanted to focus on and their preferred kinds of assignments. In particular, during the trying times of Covid, due to the often experimental mode of the online lessons, the students felt more at ease dropping suggestions in the Teams chatbox (Note 2), and I greatly appreciated their initiative as a sign of resilience and passion for learning.

The theme of academic identity was warmly responded to by many students (some of whom in their final year), who laid bare a number of unexpected difficulties in their day-to-day university life, from relating to their supervisors and understanding what was expected of them to knowing deadlines and procedures for submitting essays and dissertations. Some of them complained about the lack of “academic training” or, more realistically, the absence of an orientation day that could introduce them to the basics of university life and academic requirements, while others were more positive about the supporting role played by more senior students (Note 3):

Often undergraduates, but as well postgraduates have no idea of what academic discourse is. In school, especially in Italy, education is mostly focused on oral exposition, leaving little space to written production. This is often a problem when an undergraduate arrives at university and is asked to write different types of essay (Ida)

A controversial aspect concerned the symbolic distance between students and lecturers, which was perceived as threatening by some and non-existent by others, who had had more fruitful and relaxed encounters with academic staff. As noted by a student looking back on her courses:

Not all professors were able to convey the same passion and knowledge to the students. Some of these have had a more standardized attitude aimed exclusively at the study of the reference texts. Others made difficult, several times, the study path of some, repeatedly failing the exams. But among these, there were also those who, with such dedication, were able to make people passionate about the subject, fill learning gaps, make them participate. (Eliana)

In some cases, even the relationship among peers was felt to be problematic because of the pressure to compete for academic success:

I believe however, with regard to socialization, that there is some defect probably because the widespread mentality is often competitive among students. Not everyone is inclined to give each other a hand by sharing notes, opinions and information as they are very focused on themselves. Furthermore, there are very few subjects that involve working groups, seminars, presentations and therefore require more active participation among students. (Claudia)

Another theme that elicited contrasting views was the role played by ethics and social justice in academia, as the optimism of many students was contradicted by cautious neutrality or bleak scepticism in others:

We think that ethics and social justice have a proper place in academia. The academic community must promote principles of ethics and social justice. It can be considered one of its first aims. (Rosa and Rita)

I'm sure ethics and social justice should have more importance in academia and, in general, in every study or workplace. (Lea)

I think that there is not a proper place in academia for ethics and social justice, because there is too much focus on the scientific and the research questions. (Ada)

The variety of views was to me revealing both of the uniqueness of every student's experience of academia and of the atmosphere of trust created by sharing interests and concerns in a non-judgemental way.

4.2 Academic Writing Skills and Resources

The second objective of developing the students' academic writing skills was achieved through more traditional activities focused on language use, paragraphing, text organization, quoting, paraphrasing, and academic discourse conventions. Although these activities were not as creative and enjoyable as the ones in line with the academic literacies approach, they were valuable opportunities for the students to exercise their language skills, test their understanding of academic discourse, and explore free online resources such as www.just-the-word.com, a comprehensive dictionary and database of collocations. Moreover, the texts used for the linguistic and discursive exercises were academic excerpts investigating some of the topics under discussion, such as academic identity, socializing at university, and the tension between competitiveness and collaborativeness in academia. Not only did they represent interesting readings but also fine models of academic writing and argumentation, which widened our classroom discussion to the research of published authors.

My positive assessment of the academic writing courses was confirmed by the students' anonymous questionnaires, which mostly highlighted their enjoyment in sharing experiences and ideas with their peers. One response also praised the attention devoted to the students' views: "I also liked the fact that we students were asked for our thoughts and opinions", a comment which may suggest that student-driven discussion does not necessarily suit all tutors (or disciplines). Indeed, one strength of the courses was, in my view, to combine the dialogic method of academic literacies with the practical goal-driven approach of English for Academic Purposes. Yet, although the discussion activities were greatly appreciated, I had the impression that they were to some extent regarded as therapeutic sessions in which the students could express their worries and hope to receive a solution (as well as empathy) from the other participants, as hinted in one of the comments: "I would suggest to be much more clear from the very beginning of the course about the practical schedule of the lessons in terms of both topics and way of learning." As noted in many academic writing courses, the strongly utilitarian and goal-driven attitude of the students can prove a dampener on the ideological deconstruction of academic roles, especially because exercising criticality can often be perceived by students as a purely rhetorical exercise not really conducive to a "structural change" deleting the power asymmetry between professors and students.

4.3 The Questionnaire Results

The postgraduate students' response during the activities, their written and oral assignments, as well as their

informal emails and Teams messages, have provided me with plenty of feedback on their process of enculturation into the literacy practices of their degree programmes. Additionally, in order to work out some guidelines for an academic writing course from the perspective of the target users, thirty-three doctoral students were asked to fill in an anonymous questionnaire about what they deemed most important in a course on English for Academic Purposes. The questionnaire informants specialize in three different doctoral programmes: a large group at the University of Napoli Federico II specialize in “Mind, Gender and Language”, and in “Politiche Pubbliche di Coesione e Convergenza nello Scenario Europeo” (“Public Policies of Cohesion and Convergence in the European Scenario”), while a smaller group specialize in “Eurolinguaggi e terminologie specialistiche” (“Eurolanguages and specialized terminologies”) at the University Parthenope in Napoli (Note 4). Compared to the more than one hundred postgraduates in International Relations attending my classes from September 2020 to May 2022, this was a much smaller group almost entirely composed of Italian nationals, in addition to a student from Greece, and one from Costa Rica. However, because their interest in academic writing, and particularly publishing, is substantial and validated by their own research experiences, their responses to the questionnaires can give interesting insights into their major concerns with regard to academic writing and publishing. In order to receive straightforward answers, the questions were very simple and only concerned the students’ attitudes to academic writing conventions, creativity and criticality. In the future these questions could be refined to include other aspects such as the students’ background knowledge of academic discourse, their academic writing routines (e.g., note-taking, sourcing, paraphrasing, etc.) and their own ideas of good academic writing.

The large majority of doctoral students (n. 29) consider academic writing and publishing extremely important to their study and career while four of them consider it only slightly important. As for their experiences as authors, two-thirds of the doctoral students (22 out of 33) submitted at least a paper for publication in English, while only eighteen have had their research published in English. There was a general agreement on accuracy and academic writing conventions as the most important aspects of academic writing (Figures 1 and 2), while a few doctoral students declared little or no interest in other aspects like creativity and criticality (Figures 3 and 4). This finding can hardly be considered unexpected in light of the utilitarian approach shown by many students. Although the discussion activities and reflective assignments were unanimously appreciated throughout the course by the students, who enjoyed the opportunity to experiment with their use of academic language, creativity and criticality, it is a commonplace that the norm-oriented view of academic writing still remains the dominant one (Belcher, 2007). The PhD students, who juggle the many commitments of their life as novice researchers, are keen on exploring their new clothes but typically choose the ones more conventional and in line with senior scholars’ expectations. As the Latin saying goes, “In medio stat virtus”, meaning that the best approach to writing and publishing lies somewhere in the middle, halfway between daring and compliance. After all, finding one’s voice (and one’s way) in academia takes long, perhaps a whole lifetime.

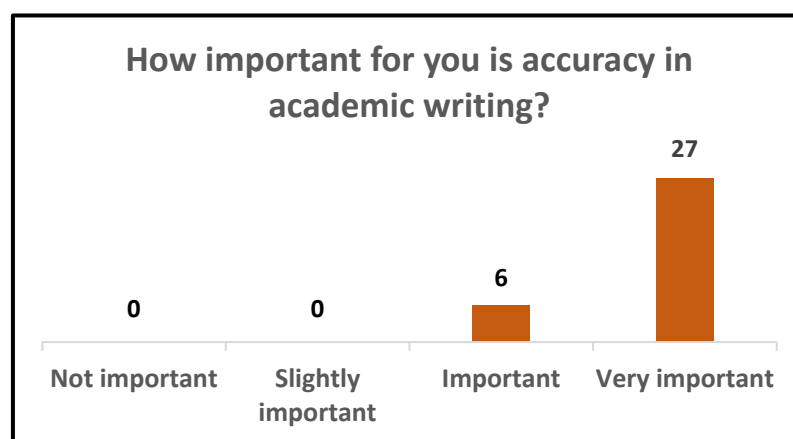


Figure 1. The PhD students’ views on accuracy

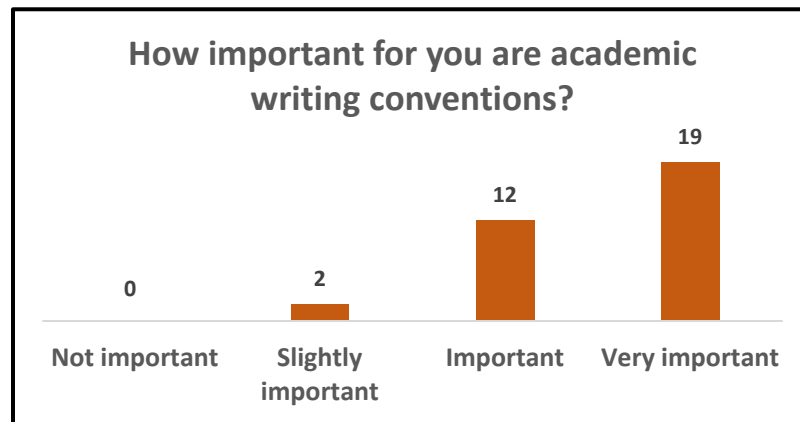


Figure 2. The PhD students' views on academic writing conventions

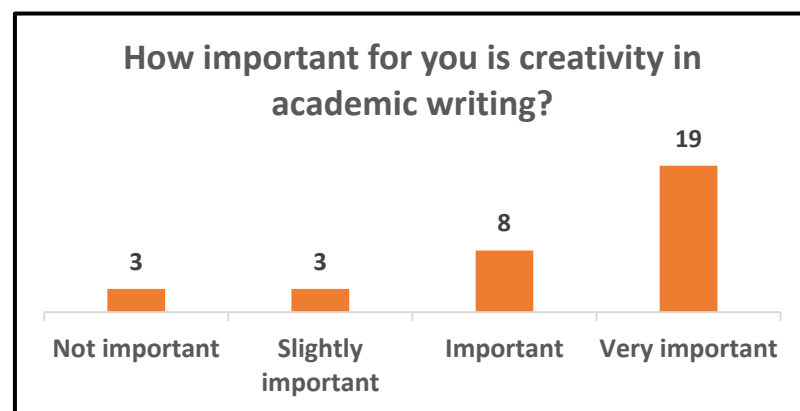


Figure 3. The PhD students' views on creativity

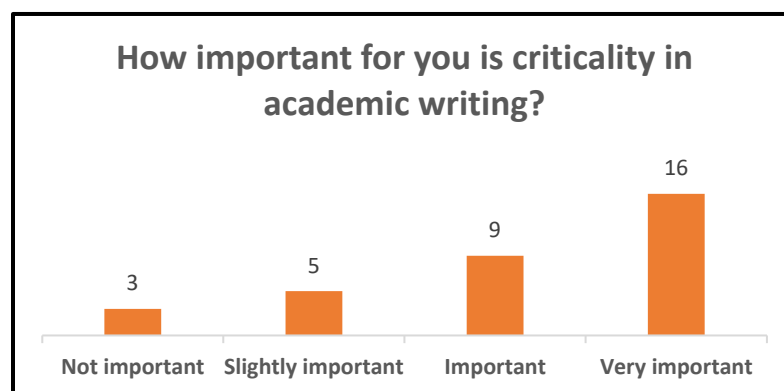


Figure 4. The PhD students' views on criticality

5. Concluding Remarks

The marketization of higher education is a rather disconcerting trend in current society, turning published research into a commodity, and students' and lecturers' work alike into a set of assessment criteria we need to tick to be able to comply with the quality assurance regimes in place across the European Union. As argued by Sally Mitchell (2010) in her insightful study of the latest trends in higher education, the so-called "culture of transparency", with its exhaustive marking scheme only assessing the measurable aspects of assignments, can become an end in itself and, more worryingly, obliterate the creativity and criticality associated with writing.

In the face of the mounting pressure to meet the scholarly performance indicators decided by governments and university managers on the basis of misleadingly objective criteria of worthiness, academia can either become an alienating and fiercely competitive environment or “shift away from knowledge production as a competitive market economy, [...] pointing to ‘open access’ as a possible way forward for knowledge production and dissemination” (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 172). Sharing ideas and research work in progress could be another possible way forward to showcase quality research and enhance the impact of the academic community worldwide.

This study has examined the potential of the academic literacies framework to develop the writing skills of postgraduate students and their confidence as junior members of academia. On the basis of the postgraduates’ responses and questionnaires at the University of Napoli Federico II, I have identified a possible clash between the students’ drive to comply with academic conventions and the importance they attach to other aspects of academic writing, such as criticality and creativity. More evidence is needed to assess the students’ attitudes and also the effectiveness of blending academic literacies with norm-oriented writing activities, something which I intend to investigate over my next writing courses.

The academic literacies paradigm, like many other oppositional movements within and beyond the university, can be regarded as an encouragement to question the asymmetrical power relations among academic stakeholders (i.e., students, scholars, managers and publishers) and, more importantly perhaps, to focus on issues of individual and collective growth, as well as personal well-being. Whatever the direction we decide to take, it is entirely our responsibility.

References

- Archer, A. (2008). ‘The place is suffering’. Enabling dialogue between students’ discourses and academic literacy conventions. *English for Specific Purposes*, 27, 255–266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2007.10.002>
- Becher, T., & Trowler, P. (2001). *Academic Tribes and Territories. Intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Belcher, D. D. (2007). Seeking acceptance in an English-only research world. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2006.12.001>
- Billig, M. (2013). *Learn to Write Badly. How to Succeed in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139208833>
- Canagarajah, A. S. (2002). *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt5hjn6c>
- Caplan, N. A. (2019). Asking the right question: Demystifying writing assignments across the disciplines. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 41, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2019.100776>
- Clark, R., & Ivanic, R. (1997). *The Politics of Writing*. London: Routledge.
- Coffin, C., & Donohue, J. P. (2012). Academic Literacies and systemic functional linguistics: How do they relate? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 11, 64–75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2011.11.004>
- Curry, & Lillis, T. (2004). Multilingual scholars and the Imperative to Publish in English: Negotiating Interests, Demands and Rewards. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(4), 663–688. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588284>
- Dahmash, N. B. (2021). We Were Scared of Catching the Virus’: Practices of Saudi College Students During the COVID-19 Crisis. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 11(1), 152–165. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v11n1p152>
- Ding, A., & Bruce, I. (2017). *The English for Academic Purposes Practitioner. Operating on the Edge of Academia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-59737-9>
- Flowerdew, J. (2015). Some thoughts on English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) and related issues. *Language Teaching*, 48(2), 250–262. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444812000523>
- Gardner, S. (2012). Genres and registers of student report writing: An SFL perspective on texts and practices. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 11, 52–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2011.11.002>
- Gee, J. P. (2015). The New Literacy Studies. In J. Roswell & K. Pahl (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Literacy Studies* (pp. 35–48). London: Routledge.
- Good, J. (2015). An action research intervention towards overcoming “theory resistance” in photojournalism students. In T. Lillis, K. Harrington, M. R. Lea & S. Mitchell (Eds.), *Working with academic literacies: case studies towards transformative practice* (pp. 55–64). Anderson, South Carolina: Parlor Press.

- <https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2015.0674.2.03>
- Hyland, K. (2015). *Academic Publishing: Issues and Challenges in the Construction of Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2016). Academic Publishing and the myth of linguistic injustice. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 31, 58–69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2016.01.005>
- Hyland, K., & Hamp-Lyons, L. (2002). EAP: Issues and Directions. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1, 1–12. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1475-1585\(02\)00002-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1475-1585(02)00002-4)
- Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. (K.) (2021). A bibliometric study of EAP research: Who is doing what, where and when? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 49, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2020.100929>
- Jones, C., Turner, J., & Street, B. (Eds.). (2000). *Students Writing in the University* (Cultural and epistemological issues). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/swll.8>
- Lea, M. R. (2004). Academic literacies: a pedagogy for course design. *Studies in Higher Education*, 29(6), 739–756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0307507042000287230>
- Lea, M. R., & Jones, S. (2011). Digital literacies in higher education: Exploring textual and technological practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 36(4), 377–395. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075071003664021>
- Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student Writing in higher education: an academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education: New Contexts*, 23(2), 157–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079812331380364>
- Lillis, T. (2000). Whose “Common Sense”? Essayist literacy and the institutional practice of mystery. In C. Jones, J. Turner & B. Street (Eds.), *Students Writing in the University* (Cultural and epistemological issues, pp. 127–147). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/swll.8.13lil>
- Lillis, T., & Curry, M. J. (2010). *Academic Writing in a Global Context. The politics and practices of publishing in English*. London: Routledge.
- Lillis, T., & Curry, M. J. (2018). Trajectories of knowledge and desire: Multilingual women scholars researching and writing in academia. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 38, 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.03.008>
- Lillis, T., Harrington, K., Lea, M. R., & Mitchell, S. (Eds.). (2015). *Working with academic literacies: case studies towards transformative practice*. Anderson, South Carolina: Parlor Press. <https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2015.0674>
- Lillis, T., & Scott, M. (2007). Defining academic literacies research: Issues of epistemology, ideology and strategy. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 5–32. <https://doi.org/10.1558/japl.v4i1.5>
- Lillis, T., & Tuck, J. (2016). Academic Literacies: a critical lens on writing and reading in the academy. In K. Hyland & P. Shaw (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes* (pp. 30–43). London: Routledge.
- Mauranen, A. (1993). Contrastive ESP rhetoric: Metatext in Finnish-English economics texts. *English for Specific Purposes*, 12(1), 3–22. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0889-4906\(93\)90024-I](https://doi.org/10.1016/0889-4906(93)90024-I)
- Mitchell, S. (2010). Now you don't see it, now you do. Writing made visible in the university. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 9(2), 133–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022210361452>
- Muthwii, M. J. (2004). Language Planning and Literacy in Kenya: Living with Unresolved Paradoxes. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 5(1), 34–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664200408669078>
- Street, B. V. (1995). *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy Development, Ethnography and Education*. London: Longman.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swales, J. M. (2004). *Research Genres. Explorations and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524827>
- Swales, J. M. (2017). Standardisation and is discontent. In M. Cargill & S. Burgess (Eds.), *Publishing Research in English as an Additional Language: Practices, Pathways and Potentials* (pp. 239–253). Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press.
- Thieme, K., & Saunders, M. A. S. (2018). How do you wish to be cited? Citation practices and a scholarly community of care in trans studies research articles. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 32, 80–90.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.03.010>

- Tribble, C. (2017). ELFA vs. Genre: A new paradigm war in EAP writing instruction. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 25, 30–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2016.10.003>
- Tuck, J. (2018). “I’m nobody’s mum in this university.” The gendering of work around student writing in UK higher education. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 32, 32–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.03.006>
- Uzuner, S. (2008). Multilingual scholars’ participation in core/global academic communities: A literature review. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7(4), 250–263. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2008.10.007>
- Wingate, U. (2012). Using Academic Literacies and genre-based models for academic writing instruction: A ‘literacy’ journey. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 11, 26–37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2011.11.006>
- Wingate, U., & Tribble, C. (2012). The best of both worlds? Towards an English for Academic Purposes/Academic Literacies writing pedagogy. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(4), 481–495. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2010.525630>

Notes

Note 1. Centre and periphery refer respectively to the West and to the Third World, i.e. former colonies of European countries. In addition to a geopolitical meaning, they also have a socioeconomic meaning, as they refer to communities of scholars either thriving or suffering from a paucity of resources. In line with Canagarajah, I have used the centre and periphery labels (in addition to EAL writers) because of their double meaning, geopolitical and socioeconomic, which cuts across national borders and foregrounds the material conditions affecting daily living and academic endeavours.

Note 2. In 2020 and 2021, the lessons at the University of Napoli Federico II were held through Microsoft Teams, a virtual learning environment that made it possible to carry on some typical classroom activities (group work; discussion; testing; etc.).

Note 3. Please note that I have changed the students’ names for privacy reasons and left their views as in their original assignments.

Note 4. I wish to thank Prof. Raffaella Antinucci, one of the coordinators of the doctoral programme at the University Parthenope in Napoli, for giving me the opportunity to administer the questionnaires to her students.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author, with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).