

Specifically business but not
exclusively international students:
reflections on the challenges and
opportunities of native speakers and
non-native speakers together in the
ESAP classroom

Outline

- Credit-bearing English module for undergraduates
- Possible reasons for students choosing the module
- ESAP: benefits for all students
- Overlapping needs – academic literacy
- Identity of home students
- Centrality of language
- The future?

Why so many students?

- **English module for business first years:**
 - Previous years about 80-100 students
 - This year: 160 on register
 - Just about over-recruitment?

COMPULSORY:

- IELTS < 6.5
- Students identified by personal statement
- Need to 'make up' a module

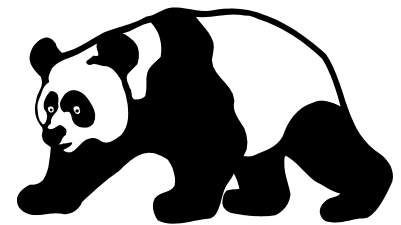
Was it the induction talk?...

THE INDUCTION TALK:

Was it the story about the panda?

Here's an example of the importance of correct punctuation...

□ A panda walked into a café.



□ He ordered a sandwich,



□ ate it,

□ then pulled out a gun and shot the waiter.

What's the explanation for this?



The explanation...(of how punctuation could be a matter of life or death...)



‘Panda,’ said the badly-punctuated wildlife manual entry for his attacker:

- *‘Large black and white mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves.’*

What’s wrong

With this definition?



Was it about the challenge to correct / proof-read?

Sentences to correct / proof-read for mistakes / improve...

- The 'iPhone' is a best seller since 2008.
- Finally, the last thing that I think differs Mac from other make-up brands is its reasonable price.
- He spend a lot of money. Even though he is not very rich.
- A lot of researches have shown the important of consumer perception.

Was it the lure of a challenge to improve ‘academic style’?

“Make it more ‘academic’...”

A lot more women are working in most developed countries. And this is true in a lot of the Asian countries. But, women find loads of barriers to their going up the career ladder, from inside the company and also from family and the society. Asian economies have really grown in recent years and this has probably had some impact on women’s promotion to management and their progress in this role. But, people don’t know a lot about women’s role in Asian management and whether there’re still big barriers that stop them getting to top management level. Basically, have Asian women cracked the glass ceiling? I’m going to look at this in my essay.

A more academic version...

What makes this one better?

Women's participation in the labour force has risen in most developed countries in the past two decades. This is also true in many of the Asian countries. However, women encounter numerous barriers to their advancement, from inside the company and also from family and the society. The rapid growth of Asian economies in recent years may have had some impact on women's promotion to management and their progress in this role. Little is known, however, about women's role in Asian management and whether there still exist major barriers to their progress. The key question is whether Asian women have 'cracked the glass ceiling'. This essay will address this issue by focusing on...

Was it the promise to make it relevant?

What the classes cover...

- ▣ Writing reports and essays
- ▣ Writing about case studies and data
- ▣ Using reading sources in your writing: referencing, summarising and paraphrasing
- ▣ Presentation and discussion skills
- ▣ Business and Academic Vocabulary
- ▣ Expanding your grammar range and improving accuracy (grammar, spelling, punctuation)
- ▣ Professional writing and speaking: Emails, letters, pitches
- ▣ And more...

- ▣ Will also cover some Professional writing and speaking skills
- ▣ All skills covered in KL1979 Business Studies: Communication Skills – useful for future jobs and careers:
 - ▣ Excellent writing and communication skills vital for **'employability'**
 - ▣ Also research skills
 - ▣ Proof-reading skills etc.

Was it the famous quote?

“No-one speaks (or writes) academic English as a first language. It must be learned by observation, study and experiment.” (Gillett, 2009)

Gillett, A (2009) Using English for Academic Purposes [Online] Available from:
<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writframgenre.htm> [Accessed on 24.09.11]

Or controversially... the name change?

Original name of module:

'English for academic purposes for business students'

'Perhaps get rid of the word 'English' to attract home students?'

Me: **'Writing and speaking for business students'?**

'Not sexy enough'

The search continues...

Thought:

'Not what we do'

**'Business
Communication
Skills'**

Final title proposed and
agreed:

**Business Studies: Communication
Skills**

Was it because they *had* to choose something?

The module = an elective

Alternatives: Modern Foreign Language //
'Law for Business'

Whatever the reason... Need a course for EVERYONE:

- native speakers / non-native speakers
- those who chose it / those who have to do it



TOWIE

The only way is ESAP...

Academic Literacies approach: The models – approaches to the acquisition of good e.g. writing

1. Study Skills - Deficit model

- ▣ “atomised skills” designed to “fix problems”

2. Academic Socialisation model

- ▣ “homogeneous culture” “writing as a transparent medium”

3. Academic literacies model

- ▣ Heterogeneous: “genres, fields and disciplines”; “gap between staff expectations and student interpretation”

Benefits of ESAP for all - International students and home students together

For 'international' students:

- Exposure to NS English & help with vocabulary
- New approach after years of English learning
- Not a NNS issue only – avoid the 'deficit' model as major focus
- Can harness UK students' UK business knowledge

For 'home' students:

- Position as experts:
 - ▣ 1) language = vocabulary
 - ▣ 2) UK business
 - ▣ 3) As young people = brands and products
- 'Academic socialisation' to university level writing and speaking (including style / use of sources)
- Not quite an 'English class' – avoid the 'deficit' model to some extent

Benefits for all...



**International
students**

**Home
students**

Both share the need:

**To learn the way of writing about business in an
academic context**

e.g. 'structure' / 'argument' / 'analysis' / 'evidence' – “elusive”
terms (Lea and Street, 1998, p168)

Explore what might mean in UG business studies

The Benefits of ESAP

“(...) a multitude of practices and strategies where argument and engagement are crafted within specific communities that have different ideas about what is worth communicating, how it can be communicated, what readers are likely to know, how they might be persuaded (...)”

(Hyland, 2002, p391)

Everyone's need – not just NNS

Principles of syllabus and materials design

- Tracking students' needs – business modules assessment schedule
- Frequent small summative assessment tasks with business topic focus – some in-class
- Business articles / examples / issues
- Writing 'tasks' that are specifically for business
- Utilise students' knowledge of business theory and business culture – treat them as experts
- Business and academic vocabulary
- Exploration of writing about business topics – how arguments expressed, supported etc.

Evidence of engagement with ESAP approach?

Sentence types - intro



First a discussion about the business topic, then short text about topic – exercise to identify **academic** / **bus** / **informal** vocabulary

- 4 Coca-Cola's latest **response** is a **campaign** designed to **challenge preconceptions** of Coke as an unnatural beverage. The activity, which centres on a 30-second TV **ad** called 'Pemberton', **emphasises** that Coke continues **to be made** to a 122-year-old recipe and is, **therefore**, free from modern preservatives or flavourings. **According to** Cathryn Sleight, Coca-Cola GB's **marketing director**, the **campaign originated from** a discovery that Coke **consumers 'didn't** know that it has no added preservatives or artificial flavours. **We felt it was important to** reassure them'.
- 5 Sleight and her team are **in a tight spot** because of Coke's secret formula. **Despite** recent **seismic** changes in **consumer tastes**, she cannot alter the **formulation** of Coke in anyway. The last **attempt** to do that in the 80s **resulted in** marketing **disaster**. **Trapped** between a **fixed offering** on one side and a rapidly **changing market** on the other, **the result is** a **campaign** that will **achieve** none of its **revitalisation objectives**. The message that Coke is not as unnatural as one might think, because it has no preservatives **is not strong enough to take on** the water and fruit drinks that now populate Coke's **category**. At the same time, **pushing the** '122-years-old' **button is likely to speed up** the **dustification** of Coke's **brand appeal**.

Ritson, M (2008) 'Cola Rivals are fighting a losing battle', *Marketing* 16th July 2008, Proquest [Online], Available at: <http://proquest.umi.com/>, (Accessed: 30.9.11)

Evidence of engagement – Sentence types!?

3. COMPLEX SENTENCES

e.g. ‘**Despite recent changes in consumer tastes, she cannot alter the formulation of Coke in any way**’

A complex sentence contains *one independent clause* and one (or more) dependent clause. The more important idea is placed in the independent clause and is underlined in the following examples:

- Although women could own property, they could not vote.
- Essay writing is a skill which all students need to acquire.
- What differentiates the Spanish football league from the English league is that the latter has fewer home-grown players.

TASK

WRITING YOUR OWN SENTENCES

Using the examples of MOBILE PHONES – any of the following e.g. Nokia, Motorola, Apple, Samsung, LG, Sony Ericsson etc...

With a partner, write some COMPLEX / COMPOUND-COMPLEX sentences about any mobile phone brand(s). Try to use a variety of grammatical structures.



Evidence of engagement – Applying Business Knowledge

PESTLE analysis (covered in a ‘Business Environment’ module) – Getting students to use their knowledge:

After discussing Apple products in previous weeks:

- ❖ Which of the PESTLE factors have most influence on Apple’s operations? Give some examples.
- ❖ If Apple wanted to set up a factory in China, what would be the key PESTLE factors in that case? Give examples.



paragraph writing practice





Who are these 'home' students?

Diversity of both 'home' and 'international' students - examples

'Home' / 'Native-speaker' students:

Have the English but not always:

- Correct punctuation & grammar
- Vocabulary range – business and academic
- Analytical writing

“Non-traditional students” – confusion about conventions and “what tutors really wanted”

(Lillis and Turner, 2001)

ESAP – less threatening way to approach skills, language and ways of thinking & writing required

‘Key Skills’ – Who should teach them?

‘Key skills’ – part of lifelong learning

From “techniques” (addressed by ‘Study Skills’) to
“understanding” (addressed by subject lecturers)

“It can only be achieved within the subject and through
explanations, modelling and feedback by subject tutors”
(Wingate, 2006, p463)

No acknowledgement of ESAP expertise

Who should teach students what they need to know?

Study
Skills
trainers

ESAP
teachers

Subject
lecturers

ESAP expertise

“(...) subject specialists (...) may not know how to help L2 learners even when they want to”

(Snow, 1997, cited in Belcher, 2006, p140)

Same applies to L1 students too:

- need deep understanding of what is required
- need language expertise needed for successful writing

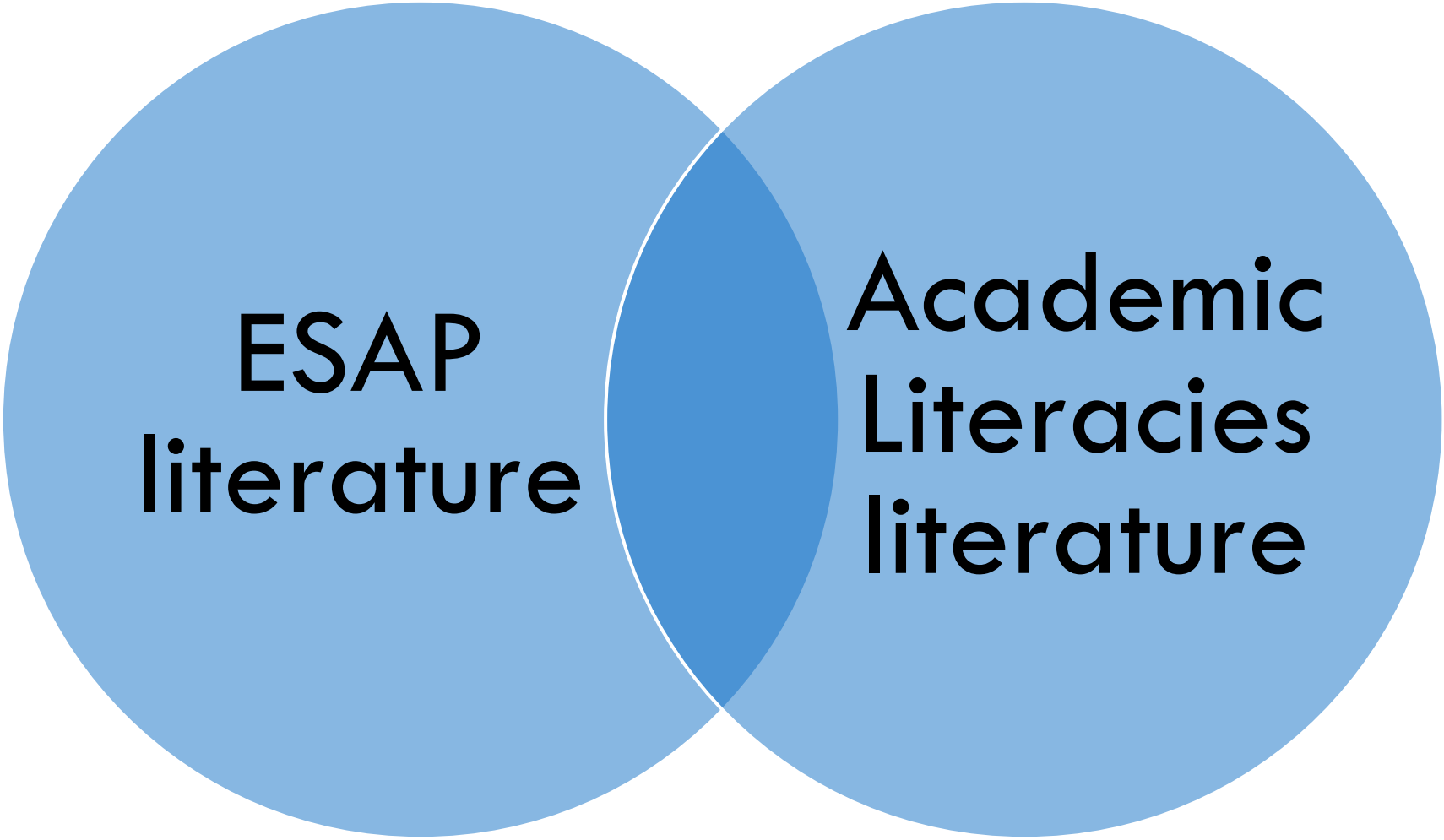
Centrality of language

Language as 'surface' feature:

“(...) underestimates the extent to which students need to be able to manipulate different constructions, widen their lexical and collocational repertoire, develop a wider sensitivity to nuancing through language use , and structure an argument in order to enhance their academic performance, and their academic voice in the wider community”

(Turner, 2004, p107)

Where from here?



**ESAP
literature**

**Academic
Literacies
literature**

The future

My question in 2009:

If EAP does not follow the ‘specific’ trend, will we one day be ‘combined’ with writing support for native speakers?

Wrong question!?

Another question:

What is the best way to address everyone’s needs?

ESAP modules – with regular assessment

...

Academic literacies approach (‘by subject tutors only’ argument)

“(...) students need to be given the experience of dealing with academic tasks, and feedback on this experience in order to encourage reflection. On the basis of that reflection, they then can develop concepts and strategies to deal with similar tasks more expertly.”

(Wingate, 2006, p458)

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Food for thought...

1. How do we effectively communicate our expertise to the rest of the university?
2. Can we / Should we put ourselves at the forefront of provision for all students?
3. Should we be pessimistic about our future?