

## BOOK NOTES

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LOUISE J. RAVELLI AND ROBERT A. ELLIS (eds.), *Analysing academic writing: Contextual frameworks*. London & New York: Continuum, 2004. (Pb 2005). Pp. xvi, 280. Hb £25.00.

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Rather than focus on expert writing – as the title might suggest – the 14 contributors to this volume have chosen to center on issues related to students' written efforts to cope with the exigencies of the academic discourse community. The analyzed texts are viewed as "intimately related to their contexts" (p. 1). The latter are approached in ways based mainly on Systemic Functional Linguistics, along with "related social-constructivist frameworks and more generalised perspectives on ethnography" (1). The texts that provide empirical data were produced mainly by undergraduate students, but some are by high school and graduate students and, with the exception of one (German) set, were written by users of English (now THE language of international academic exchange) as a first, second, or foreign language. The type of student, the type of academic writing (size, genre, level, discipline) and various other aspects of the social, cultural, and educational context are treated in their interrelatedness, which is theorized about, supported by empirical evidence, and, naturally, accompanied by pedagogical considerations in each study.

As the editors (senior lecturers at Australian universities) point out in the introduction, the articles fall into three groups. The first deals with interpersonal meanings in terms of issues of identity and the construction of writer roles: patterns of engagement in L2 undergraduate writing (despite the apparent absence of explicit appraisal and attitude); facets of attitude and grading; author roles of student writers in German business writing, revealed by the use of deontic and epistemic modal verbs; negotiation success in a first-year sociology essay written by a South African student; the examination of exegesis as a genre in art and design master's degrees.

The next group of articles concentrates on the management of textual resources: an insightful analysis of the ability to handle hyper-themes (in their dual function of ensuring retrospective and prospective connections) in management and history essays; developing discipline-specific writing – an investigation of theme as a resource for encoding the "angle of the message" in undergraduate (first year vs. third year) geography essays; IELTS as preparation for tertiary writing – textual and interpersonal strategies (theme, Appraisal) in short argumentative essays written by non-native speakers of English who wish to enter English-language universities; the role of grammatical metaphor in (ESL) technical writing; and, finally, a discussion of problems regarding metaphorical reconstrual of meaning in expository texts by Chinese EFL tertiary-level students, mostly in science and engineering.

All the articles inevitably tackle pedagogical issues, but the final group is entirely concerned with pedagogically centered research on academic writing. Two articles raise issues presented by the introduction of technology into genre-based literacy pedagogy. They point to controversies regarding learning online, the ratio between discipline-specific discourse and the superimposed technical discourse, computer-mediated interaction with the teacher and peers, and other topics. The final article rounds up this SFL-oriented collective effort by discussing the teaching of writing from an international perspective (focusing on the UK and the United States) and from an Australian perspective, the applicability of SFL for teaching academic writing, and the recontextualization of this theoretical linguistic framework "to serve as a powerful technology to help build students' and teachers' understanding of how and why language works in the way it does" (268).

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