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Research Findings on Teaching Grammar for Academic Writing

Eli Hinkel
(Seattle University, USA)

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In recent years, in ESL pedagogy, the research on identifying simple and complex grammatical structures and vocabulary has been motivated by the goal of helping learners to improve the quality and sophistication of their second language (L2) production and writing. In academic writing, various L2 skills and language features have different degrees of importance. The purpose of this paper is to highlight research findings for teaching grammar essential for producing L2 formal and academic prose. Specifically, the paper focuses on specific grammar constructions and their attendant lexical elements that are critical in teaching L2 academic writing. These requisite components of academic grammar skills are mandatory for students who aspire to success in their university work. In addition, the paper also briefly outlines the grammatical and lexical features of academic text that are customarily taught in ESL classes but that may be relatively unimportant.

Key words: teaching grammar, academic writing, ESL pedagogy, grammatical features, lexical features, academic text

1. INTRODUCTION

Since at least the 1920s, a great deal of effort has been devoted to identifying the essential grammatical and lexical features of text that can be useful in L2 materials and teaching to reduce the learning burden and/or simplify communication in a second language (e.g., Ogden's *Basic English* (1930), West's General Service List (1953), or Thordike & Lorge (1943)). On the other hand, in recent years, in ESL pedagogy, the research on identifying simple and complex grammatical structures and vocabulary has been motivated by the converse goal of helping learners to improve the quality and sophistication of their language production and writing (Celce-Murcia, 2002; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2005; Hinkel, 2002a, 2004a, 2004b, 2011, in press; Jordan, 1997; Nation, 2009,

2011; Snow, 2005).

To date, a large body of research has established the fact that effective L2 usage in, for example, academic speaking and writing demands comparatively advanced language proficiency (Hinkel, 2011; Lee, 2009; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008; Thompson, 2001; Weigle, 2002). As every L2 user knows from experience, attaining the necessary level of proficiency takes focused instruction and concerted effort from both teachers and learners. And expediting this process at least to some extent can definitely prove to be beneficial.

In the production of academic writing, various L2 skills have different degrees of importance. For instance, many studies have established strong positive correlations between students' academic performance and grammar, reading and writing proficiencies (Byrd & Reid, 1998; Johns, 1997; Jordan, 1997; Lee & Schallert, 1997; Zhou, 2009). Celce-Murcia (1991) emphasizes that for educated, academically-oriented, and advanced L2 learners, grammar instruction is essential if they are to achieve their educational and professional goals. She comments that "the importance of a reasonable degree of grammatical accuracy in academic or professional writing cannot be overstated" (p. 465). Celce-Murcia cites a study that indicates that a high frequency of grammar errors in L2 students' academic writing can make essays unacceptable to university faculty, and an average of 7.2 grammatical errors per 100 words in L2 academic prose was judged to be "nonpassing" by professors in mainstream courses.

The essential elements of grammar instruction can be designed to be flexible within the curriculum structure, and the amount of effort and time devoted to each can be adjusted depending on learners' needs. The teacher's work load and the student's "learning burden" (Nation, 2001, p. 23), i.e., "the amount of effort required" to learn L2 grammar and the necessary lexis, are expected to be realistic but certainly not very light. While activities to develop learners' conversational fluency or narrating personal experiences are typically less work and more fun for both teachers and students, they have not demonstrably equipped students for success in university-level academic courses (Bacha, 2002; Hinkel, 2002b; Hyland, 1996, 2002).

Grammar textbooks and many writing courses usually cover the traditional range of structures that have been included in grammar teaching from time immemorial. The reasons for this lie in the historical criteria for writing and publishing "complete" grammars and grammar manuals. In light of the fact that L2 instruction almost always takes place under great time constraints for many teachers and learners, it is important to maximize language gains and make learning as efficient as possible.

2. REQUIRED AND ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS

Almost all conclusions regarding the students' crucial language abilities and preparatory work focus directly on students' academic English required to meet the demands of college writing (Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis, & Swann, 2003; Hinkel, 2006, 2012, 2013; Swales & Feak, 2012; Tribble, 2002).

- Language abilities: Proficiency in academic English, beyond conversational fluency, including competencies in
  - the grammar of standard written English
  - complex sentence structure
  - developed academic vocabulary
  - punctuation conventions

- Preparatory work: Specific direct and explicit instruction in academic English with an emphasis on grammatical accuracy and editing skills considered to be paramount in academic writing.

Grammar instruction that has the goal of preparing students for academic studies needs to be designed to develop learners' practical and useful skills, directly relevant to producing academic text. Teaching grammar for writing cannot take place in isolation from the lexical and discourse features of text: e.g., the verb tenses in academic prose are determined by the type of context in which they are used (Conrad, 2010; Cortazzi, 2007; Hinkel, 2002b, in press; O'Keefe, McCarthy, & Carter, 2007; Zhou, 2009). For instance, the present tense is useful in citations of sources but not so much in descriptions of case studies (Charles, 2006; Swales & Feak, 2012).

Two types of grammar constructions and lexis are briefly reviewed below: (1) the required constructions without which no L2 academic writer can survive and which require intensive and persistent instruction, and (2) the outdated or conversational constructions that are very rare in academic prose. The latter group does not represent a good use of learning effort and instructional time.

The traditional range of grammar structures in textbooks and instruction practically always includes, for example:

- The entire array of the English tenses from the present progressive to the past perfect
- All types of subordinate clauses

- The passive voice in all tenses
- Gerunds and infinitives
- Articles
- Conditionals

On the other hand, these structures are not used with equal frequencies or for the same purposes. Some of them have almost completely disappeared from use in Standard American and Standard British English. For example, past perfect progressive or the future perfect passive (e.g., *The car will have been washed by 3 o'clock*) is hardly ever found in today's English, and the teaching of noun clauses as sentence subjects (e.g., *That she called today is very important*) is not the best use of class time. In addition, a number of studies (e.g., Hinkel, 2003; Shaw & Liu, 1998) have established that with greater exposure to conversational interactions in English and despite intensive academic writing instruction, L2 writers often employ informal language features in formal and academic contexts.

On the other hand, current research does not identify a similar increase in the use of "academic style" textual features (Shaw & Liu, 1998, p. 246), considered to be grammatically advanced (e.g., subordinate clauses). In many cases of language instruction, L2 students are exposed to formal English writing, but in addition, they have so much contact with informal conversational discourse that learners become adept at employing the features of the conversational register without developing register differentiation skills.

Teaching the whole gamut of English grammar when a great deal of it is patently useless to students may be one reason that explicit grammar teaching is often seen as a tedious exercise. For example, English simple past and present tenses are required in both speaking and writing. Most written text requires gerunds, infinitives, the passive voice in the simple or progressive tenses, or adjective clauses. In light of the fact that all class time is limited, prioritizing grammar structures to teach is one of the fundamental steps in all course design. In the past four decades or so a great deal of research has been conducted into the grammar features of spoken and formal written academic prose. For this reason, it is relatively easy for teachers to identify the grammar constructions that must be taught and those that can be simply skipped in the interests of time and teaching effectiveness.

Based on the findings of current research on the constructions and attendant lexis found or not found in written academic prose (e.g., Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999, Hinkel, 1997, 1999, 2002b, 2005, 2009, 2011; Frodesen, 2014; Nation, 1990; Nation & Coxhead, 2001; Nation & Webb, 2011; Paltridge, 2004; Ur, 2011), grammar structures can be divided into two major areas:

- The grammar constructions essential in academic writing
- Grammar features found in practically all L2 grammar teaching, e.g., instruction

and textbooks, but hardly ever used

3. GRAMMAR CONSTRUCTIONS ESSENTIAL IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Grammar teaching even at the intermediate levels of student proficiency can begin with an examination and analysis of structures in formal academic writing. Early on, the objective of instruction is to develop learners' awareness and noticing of common grammatical features, and then building on this foundation, the regularities in grammar structures can be explicitly addressed and practiced in the production of academic writing (Celce-Murcia, 2002; Ur, 2011). At higher proficiency levels, instruction can also highlight the effects of grammatical features on context, discourse and text, e.g., tense uses in generalizations or the important difference between conversational and informal expressions, such as *totally* and *horrible/awesome*, and formal constructions, such *a great deal* and *unsuccessful/impressive*. Heightening learners' awareness of the structure of complete sentences in academic prose (as opposed to fragments), as well as important distinctions between conversational and formal written register, should represent ongoing instructional objectives at all levels of proficiency. In grammar learning, becoming aware of how structures are used, combined with explicit teaching, can provide an additional benefit because learners can notice structures that otherwise they may simply miss (Ellis, 1997).

3.1. Sentence Construction

In English, the structure of a basic sentence is relatively easy to teach because English has a rigid word order, e.g., the subject is followed by a verb, which is followed by an object. Although many variations of this skeletal structure are possible, the additions also adhere to somewhat inflexible patterns.

This is what needs to be taught:

- Sentence construction and boundaries, e.g., avoiding fragments and run-ons
- Phrase construction, e.g., most singular countable nouns need to have an article, or every sentence must have a verb to be grammatical

The simplest approach to teaching the basic sentence structure can take advantage of the relative rigidity in English sentence structure. Rigidity in the order of sentence components can be similarly profitable for teaching elements of the phrase structure, e.g., the noun

phrase, the verb phrase, and the adjective phrase structure.

3.2. Verbs and the Verb Phrase

In general terms, many curricula and textbooks on L2 college-level and academic writing include at least a short section on verb tenses and voice and their uses in formal written prose (Hacker & Sommers, 2011; Kirszner & Mandell, 2011; Swales & Feak, 2012). Reid (2000, p. 283) points out that "writing conventions require specific verb tenses in different academic writing situations." She explains that abstracts of research reports and background information are "usually written in present tense, while the actual research is described in past tense or present perfect tense." According to Reid's brief note, "verb tense errors can be serious; they often interfere with communication." While most L2 textbooks provide brief explanations and exercises on each tense and active or passive voice uses, little explanation can be found to guide the L2 writer specifically about when or how particular tenses or voice can be used in academic writing.

This is what needs to be taught:

- Contextual functions and uses of verb tenses in discourse
- The simple present tense and the simple past tense (for case studies and examples) and subject-verb agreement

On the whole, progressive tenses are very rare in academic prose. However, they are common in conversations and spoken discourse, and for this reason, the usage of progressive verbs may impart a somewhat conversational flavor to academic writing. In formal academic writing, simple present (and occasionally simple past) tenses can be much more effective and easier for students to use (McCarthy, 2001; Swales & Feak, 2012).

This is what needs to be taught:

- Functions and uses of the passive voice in academic text
- Passive voice constructions in simple present and simple past tenses (e.g., *the project is completed; the file was sent*)

Uses of the passive voice are extraordinarily common in academic writing, and to a large extent, the prevalence of the passive voice is determined by academic discourse conventions (Hinkel, 2004b; Poole, 1991; Swales, 1990). The usage of the passive voice in formal writing has a number important textual functions. One of these is to project an academic indirectness, detachment, and objectivity requisite in English-language academic tradition, and particularly so in natural sciences and engineering (Hinkel, 1997, 1999;

Johns, 1997). Based on a large number of corpus analyses of academic prose, the passive voice is ubiquitous and remains a prevalent feature of academic text in various disciplines (Biber, 1988; Hyland, 1996; Johns, 1997; Swales, 1990).

This is what needs to be taught:

- Present perfect tense for introduction sections of academic essays and papers (e.g., *This issue has been considered*)
- Possibility and ability modals (e.g., *can, may, might, could*) as hedges, instead of the future tense (e.g., *If they study hard, most students can achieve their goals,* or *The company profits may rise next year*)
- Reporting verbs (around a dozen) for paraphrasing (e.g., *the author says, states, indicates, comments, notes, observes, believes, points out, emphasizes, advocates, reports, concludes, underscores, mentions, finds*)

Lists of reporting verbs can be found in most L2 grammar books, beginning with those for intermediate level students. Reporting verbs can denote such simple acts as *ask, say, speak,* or *tell*. Indeed, these reporting verbs predominate in informal spoken discourse. On the other hand, in academic prose, the most frequent reporting verbs are more lexically and semantically complex, e.g., *acknowledge, determine, discuss, remark*. Reporting verbs are particularly important in paraphrasing, writing reviews of readings, and citing information from sources in rhetorical support of a writer's position and/or opinion. Reporting verbs are used to introduce indirect (and reported) statements in the form of noun phrases or noun clauses (see below).

3.3. Noun Clauses in and for Restatement and Paraphrase

Noun clauses are highly common in academic writing, and they are probably the most common type of subordinate construction, as well as by far the most structurally complex. The most important discourse function of noun clauses is to present and paraphrase information from sources. For this reason, noun clauses are particularly prevalent in academic writing when they follow reporting verbs in summaries, restatements, and citations (Charles, 2006; Swales & Feak, 2012).

This is what needs to be taught:

- Verb tenses in noun clauses; subject and verb positions, e.g., *The author wonders where one's home is* (not **where's one's home*)

On the other hand, noun clauses in the subject position, e.g., *That students study hard is*

a well-known fact are very rare in formal academic prose even though they can be found in most grammar textbooks. These structures practically never occur in student academic writing, native and non-native alike (Hinkel, 2002a, 2002b).

3.4. Nouns, Noun Phrases, and Pronouns

Analyses of written and academic English corpora have demonstrated that gerunds and abstract derived nouns are very common in academic and professional texts (Alderson, 2007; Bhatia, 1993; Biber et al., 1999). In terms of their meanings, most gerunds and nominalizations, which are frequent in generalizations, refer to concepts, actions, and processes that would be difficult to convey by other lexical means.

This is what needs to be taught:

- Nominalizations (nouns ending in *-ion, -ity, -ness, -ment*), gerunds, and other abstract nouns of all types
- Impersonal *it*-constructions (e.g., *it seems/appears/is clear that...*)
- Noun phrases with attributive (descriptive) adjectives (e.g., *an important project*), but not such simple predicate constructions as *This project is important*

The impersonal pronoun *it* with copula *be* are more common in academic texts than practically any other written or spoken genre (Biber et al., 1999). The most prominent contextual feature of *it* + *be* is to depersonalize text and create an impression of the writer's distance and objectivity. These constructions are syntactically complex, and for this reason, they frequently present an area of difficulty for academic L2 writers.

Noun phrases with adjectives play a very important role in academic prose. While common descriptive adjectives are found practically anywhere in academic text, noun modifiers play a key role in thesis statements and statements of purpose. Modifying adjectives and adjective phrases can be used specifically for marking/signaling thesis statements considered to be obligatory in academic papers and essays (Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 2012). According to Swales and Feak (2012), for instance, in literature overviews and summaries, evaluative adjectives represent an integral part of the writer's description of a work or source. Familiarity with these modifiers can allow L2 writers to recognize them in text when they are reading, and, additionally, employ them in their own writing.

3.5. Adverb Clauses and Adverbs

In general, adverbial clauses are more common in speech than in writing. On the other hand, in instruction in academic writing and argumentative writing in particular, the uses of various types of adverb clauses, such as causative, concessive, and conditional, are often recommended in explanations, reasoning, and analysis (Hacker & Sommers, 2011; Swales & Feak, 2012).

This is what needs to be taught:

- Functions of adverbs in pivoting discourse and information flow, e.g., backgrounding information in subordinate clauses
  - Concession clauses (e.g., *although, though*)
  - Conditional clauses (e.g., *if, in case, unless, provided that*)
  - Functions and uses of formal hedges in academic prose (e.g., *according to, apparent(-ly), theoretically*)

When working with adverbial clauses in academic writing, L2 writers need to determine what information is important in their sentences: the most important information goes into the main clause, and secondary/background information goes into the adverbial clause (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985). In general terms, concessive clauses can be employed as sophisticated hedging devices that can also help writers convey a balanced perspective on an issue/topic at hand. Sentences with concessive clauses can be highly useful and easy to employ in introductions, thesis statements, topic sentences, and generalizations: e.g., *Although/While xxx, …yyy*.

3.6. Exemplification Markers

In academic writing instruction, giving examples is often strongly encouraged. In most textbooks on academic writing, among other types of supporting evidence, examples are presented as a common means of rhetorical support for the writer's position in academic writing.

This is what needs to be taught:

- Exemplification markers: *for example, for instance, such as*

Instruction in L2 academic writing usually emphasizes that providing contextually relevant examples and illustrations represents a reasonable and valid means of thesis support in explaining one’s position on an issue (Hacker & Sommers, 2011; Hinkel, 2001).

4. GRAMMAR CONSTRUCTIONS RARE IN ACADEMIC WRITING

(but still found in grammar instruction and practically all grammar textbooks)

The following features of academic writing and text have been identified as rare, and, in fact, some are never encountered in large written academic and English-language student writing corpora (Biber et al., 1999; Greenbaum, 2004; Hinkel, 2002b; Leech & Svartvik, 2004). Although many of these are traditionally taught in practically all ESL grammar courses, the features listed below may have a verifiably reduced importance in teaching L2 learners to become proficient academic writers. These constructions have a low priority, particularly when the teacher and learners have a limited amount of time to make maximum gains in improving the quality of students' writing skills.

4.1. Verbs and the Verb Phrase

In academic writing, both L1 and L2, only a small proportion (around 8%) of all verb phrases is used with the perfect aspect, and the progressive aspect is employed in even fewer constructions. Furthermore, the combination of the perfect and the progressive aspects in all tenses (e.g., *have/had been building*) is encountered particularly rarely. According to Biber et al.'s (1999) study, its rate of usage is approximately 0.5% of all verb tenses and aspects.

These verb tenses are of low instructional importance:

- Future perfect and future perfect progressive (e.g., *will have sung, will have been singing*)
- Past perfect and past perfect progressive (e.g., *had sung, had been singing*)

4.2. The Passive Voice in a Range of Tenses

The uses of the passive voice with various complex tenses and aspects, such as past perfect progressive or the future perfect passive (e.g., *The letter will have been written by tomorrow*) are hardly ever found in today's English, be it spoken or written (Greenbaum, 2004; Hinkel, 2002a, 2002b, 2003). Teaching these constructions that are found in a vast majority of grammar textbooks is not very important, nor is it the best use of limited class time. Another point that has been repeatedly made in various studies is that L2 writers tend to avoid or misuse complex passive voice constructions (Celce-Murica, 2002; Hinkel, 2004b; Master, 1991). In light of these findings, the teaching of the passive voice constructions in L2 writing should focus on those that are strongly preferred in formal written prose, but without the unnecessary complications.

These passives are of low instructional importance:

- Passive in future perfect (e.g., *will have been sung*)
- Passive in future progressive (e.g., *will be being* sung)
- Passive in present progressive (e.g., *is being sung*)
- Passive in past progressive (e.g., *was being sung*)
- Passive in past perfect (e.g., *had been sung*)
- Passive in past perfect progressive (e.g., *had been being sung*)
- **by*-phrase passives (e.g., *The depth is determined by the technician during the experiment*) —*rare, but can be still occasionally found

4.3. The Subjunctive in Noun Clauses

As early as the 1980s, Quirk et al. (1985) commented that subjunctive constructions were originally found in Old and Middle English, but it is usually described as moribund, fossilized and almost extinct in present-day English. A similar note is also made more recently by Huddleston and Pullum (2002). Given how dated subjunctive constructions are in English, there is little reason that L2 learners should be encouraged to learn them or use them.

Some examples of English subjunctive constructions are:

It is essential that he go.
The teacher insisted that we/he be on time.

4.4. Modal Verbs

Although L2 most grammar and writing texts typically explain that *must (not)* carries the meanings of obligation and necessity, this modal verb can also express authority and strict prohibition, and is seldom—if at all—employed in academic writing (Quirk, et al., 1985). In written academic prose, the modal verb *may* rarely has the meaning of permission as it is usually described but usually has the function of a hedging device. The weak meanings of possibility in *could* and *might* do not project great confidence in an outcome, action, or event (Hyland, 1998).

- Modals of obligation *must*—used only in positions of authority
- Modals of permission—*may* and *might* (also see below)

4.5. Inversions in Statements (Rather than Questions) with Negatives in the Initial Position

In constructions with initial negative adverbs and adverbial phrases (e.g., *at no time*), subject-auxiliary verb inversion has all but disappeared in Standard American English and Standard British English (Huddleston & Pullam, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985). These structures typically convey emphasis and intensity that are seldom considered appropriate in formal academic writing, where authorial detachment and objectivity are the norm (Hinkel, 1997, 1999; Johns, 1997; Jordan, 1997).

Some examples of English subjunctive constructions are:

Little did she know…
Rarely do we see…
Seldom do they find…
Hardly ever did he mention…
Not only did she come but also she brought…

4.6. Grammar Constructions Used Almost Exclusively in Conversational Discourse

In their investigations of various corpora of social conversations and spoken discourse, Brazil (1995), Leech, Rayson, and Wilson (2001), and Sinclair (1991) found a preponderance of particular constructions in conversational discourse and casual colloquial conversations, but not formal speech and writing. These constructions include indefinite and universal pronouns (e.g., *something, anyone, nobody, everything*), contractions (e.g., *don't, isn't*), emphatics (e.g., *always, totally, for sure*), exaggeratives and intensifiers (e.g., *awful, fantastic, huge*), and casual hedges (e.g., *anyway, sort of, kind of*). In light of these findings, L2 academic writers probably need to be instructed to avoid these language features, rather than how to use them:

- Indefinite pronouns (e.g., *someone, anything, nobody, everything*)
- Speaking directly to the audience (e.g., *you can never tell what will happen*)
- Contractions (e.g., *don't, can't*)
- Emphatic constructions and markers (e.g., *I do agree that this method is better; absolutely, all, always, never*)—see also below
- Exaggeratives and intensifiers: e.g., *awful(-ly), bad (-ly), by all means, deep(-ly), forever, enormous(-ly), entirely, ever, exact(-ly), extreme(-ly), for sure, huge(-ly), no way, perfect(-ly), pure(-ly), so (+adjective/verb), strong(-ly) sure(-ly), too (+*

adjective), terrible(-ly), total(-ly) unbelievable (-ly)

- A very large number of conversational hedges: e.g., *anyway, dead* (+adjective)*, in a way, like (like, you know), maybe, pretty, pretty much, something like, sort of, (as) we all know, as far as we/I know, as is (well) known, as you/everyone know(s), as the saying goes, obvious(-ly), of course, (as) everyone/people/they say(s), from what I hear/know/see/ understand*

On a tangential note, classroom pedagogy in L2 writing needs to take into consideration that the fact that something is taught does not mean that it is learned. Specifically, in addition to the language attributes that require extensive and intensive teaching or are best avoided, the following aspects of L2 academic writing to be in need of at least some degree of polishing and additional work for practically all academic L2 learners (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Bacha, 2002; Coffin et al., 2003; Hinkel, 2004a, 2004b; Manchón, 2011; Paltridge, 2004; Zhu, 2004):

- Academic vocabulary and, specifically, nouns and verbs, e.g., *democracy, hierarchy, proposes, advocates*
- Sentence boundaries and phrase construction
- Verb tenses commonly found in academic discourse, e.g., present simple and past simple
- The functions of the passive voice in academic prose
- Noun clauses in reporting constructions, e.g., *the author states that…*
- Academic hedges, e.g., *possibly, perhaps*
- Textual cohesion devices, such as sentence and phrase conjunctions, vocabulary repetition, and lexical ties (e.g., *in addition, however, aspect-characteristic-factor*)

5. A FINAL NOTE

In the past two decades, a number of publications and research syntheses have emerged to point out that, despite having studied English, as well as academic writing in English in their native and English-speaking countries, most L2 students experience a great deal of difficulty in their studies at the college- and university-levels (Hedgcock, 2005; Hinkel, 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2011; Johns, 1997; Jordan, 1997; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008; Paltridge, 2004). In regard to attaining L2 skills, many researchers have distinguished between advanced academic language proficiency and basic conversational and communication proficiency necessary to engage in daily interactions (Bratt Paulston, 1990; Cummins, 1979; Schachter, 1990; Shaw & Liu, 1998).

While there is little doubt that most L2 students are exposed to academic reading and text for comparatively lengthy periods of time and throughout their language-learning careers, mere exposure to academic text and reading is not sufficient for L2 learners to attain advanced academic proficiency essential for producing competent L2 academic prose. Thus, L2 curricula and teaching to academically-bound students needs to concentrate on expanding their syntactic and lexical repertoire. Conversational fluency does not carry with it the skills necessary for the production of academic text.

The greatest benefit of streamlining grammar instruction is that it allows language teachers to work with more efficient pathways in practical language teaching (Hinkel, 2009; in press). Grammar teaching that has the goal of preparing students for academic studies and professional activities needs to be designed to develop learners' practical and useful skills, directly relevant to producing written and academic text.

Classroom instructors are the ones who are best suited to implement appropriate, relevant, and effective instruction. They are the best judges of the applicability of particular curricular choices that can be combined with other approaches to provide the greatest benefit for the students. In virtually all academic and learning contexts, however, producing reasonably fluent and accurate written L2 text requires students to attain a relatively advanced range of grammar and attendant vocabulary features.

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Applicable levels: All

E. Hinkel
Department of Anthropology
Seattle University
United States of America
Email: elihinkel@yahoo.com

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