

The Essential Hyland

Studies in Applied Linguistics

KEN HYLAND

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Commentary on Part I

Chuck Bazerman

Ken Hyland, steeped in the methods of applied linguists, has recognized that writing is a broad and complex activity that encompasses many dimensions beyond language, but which are brought together and crystallized in the language of the text. Written language is what writers produce and what readers read. It is what goes between reader and writer and is the concrete symbolic manifestation, interpersonal action and material residue of the communicative process. The language provides the tools and external signs for writers to realize, shape and transmit meaning by serving as the stimulus for the readers' meaning-making. Yet the meaning and intent are formed in the minds of readers and writers, as are the perception of the situation (including power, economic, social and material relations) and relevant knowledge brought to bear on interpretation, including histories and intertexts evoked but not mentioned in the texts. Additionally, the world represented is known through material interaction and experience even though the processes of representation foster certain appearances and memories. Finally the social relations enacted through the texts exist in complexes that are not visible in single texts and cannot be fully understood even by full collections of related texts without evidence about the social relations in the world beyond the texts.

Hyland, along with other applied linguistic researchers engaged in language education, particularly written language education, exposes the nuances of the linguistic medium, so that the language learners can increase their interpretive, communicative and expressive potential. Hyland has made it his business to understand through many corpus studies what the resources of language are and how they are differentially deployed in different academic and scientific domains. As indicated in the chapters in the later sections of this book, his accomplishments in exposing the variations of different dimensions of linguistic practices in different academic domains through corpora studies are exemplary and set him apart from other applied linguists in their comorehensiveness, nuance and subtlety of understanding, particularly,

elusive areas of identity, affiliation and positioning. Nonetheless, and understands that ultimately the choices of language, selection of to represent in the text and the construction of the texts depend on rstanding much beyond the subtleties of language and require methods search that go beyond the examination of texts as autonomous objects, if examined in large collections or corpora. In order to put his corpus istic studies in the context of cultures, social organization, institutions, statuses, processes and activities, Hyland draws on readings from a ber of the social sciences which explicate these social issues within the emic and research worlds.

timately, however, the study of writing cannot just rely secondhand on work of other social sciences, which may not be attuned to the important ating role of language and language production. The study of writing is to engage in social research specifically in relation to language issues hat goes beyond the analysis of the linguistic realization. To initiate that igation, Hyland has added interviewing to his methodological repertoire. use of interviews goes beyond the common applied linguistic method of ng expert confirmation or explication of practices and resources. Hyland's ded use of interviewing is an important first step further getting into mind and goals of the writer, but is only a first step into a much more ough examination of these social issues, drawing on the methods of the r social sciences. This use of interviews, in particular, takes him a step ar to rhetorical analysis, which is concerned with the purposive reasoning goals of the individual language producer. But the traditional rhetorical isis is also limited as it considers social, political and material situation and equences projected from the author's point of view or interpreted from uced text. Context is also constructed within specifics of situations, rarely idering larger structural or structural dynamics, nor the actual uptake, iding or consequences of rhetorical events in sequence.

Hyland also has focused his studies on an important, but limited, domain riting – namely academic writing at the turn of the twenty-first century, ularly as expressed in the published scientific and scholarly literature, y extension student work aimed at building competence in contributing ch publications. His investigations, as well, are limited to English language ng, bolstered by the recognition of the spread of English as the global age of science and other scholarly specialties. His studies further are ily attentive to the situation of non-native speakers of English needing ublish within the English language scholarly system. This focus is well ied as it serves the urgent priorities of many scholars seeking publication, ents preparing for academic careers and universities seeking global arch recognition and excellence. More specifically many of his studies a explicit nuance and tools of language that would not be evident or subtly

used by writers who are not native speakers of English. Explication of these tools can aid in language instruction and support.

Hyland's focuses mean that scholarly publications in Chinese, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Farsi or other languages with substantial academic literatures escape his scrutiny, as does the work of students in universities where these languages are the dominant medium of instruction and evaluation. Since he is particularly focused on language features and not underlying cognitive or social processes, the consequences of his monolingual orientation is that the findings may be language-bound. Even if the educational target is academic publication in English, to support English language instruction it would be useful to understand how such instruction intersects with the first language educational writing processes, practices, textual forms and goals experienced by these non-native English students. Even the struggles of native English students with academic writing are only at the periphery of his vision. Assignments and uses of writing that are not directly framed within publication standards and purposes, but serve other educational functions, are not part of his inquiry, even if they are in English. Accordingly all the writing texts, practices and development in primary and secondary education are also beyond the scope of his inquiry. University and academic writing practices and forms, as well, change over time, and thus examining the particulars and dynamics of change would be of value. Writing practices in careers, businesses, institutions and other sites are also worth understanding both because they may engage with scientific or academic knowledge and because they may be important in students' lives once they leave the university.

Hyland's focus is a feature of his studies, not a fault. Other applied linguists have indeed studied some of the issues mentioned in the previous paragraph, and I believe Hyland himself is looking into histories of change. No one can study everything all at once, and he has chosen an important, consequential and practically useful domain to which to apply his linguistics. However, expanding his discoveries, realizations and theories to a broader understanding of writing requires caution. From my own work I have found the study of scientific and academic writing generative of much understanding of writing that is potentially more broadly applicable to writing, but the danger of overgeneralization is ever present. Making extensions of conclusions based on academic writing needs to examine and compare the nature of domains, their activities, their timing and locations, and the differing participants and actors with other commitments, interests, knowledge, social positions and social engagements.

In the chapters in this section, Hyland presents his broader view of writing and offers samples of the evidence corpus linguistics is able to contribute, carefully limiting his domain to the research-oriented university. In Chapter 1

lays out the case why writing is central within the work of the university and, in turn, is sensitive to many key dimensions of academic life. He further argues that academic writing is of central concern for the societies within which the universities reside in light of the democratization of university entrance and the role of academic publication in knowledge societies. He notes that research-oriented higher education writing presents challenging novelty to students despite prior education, embedded as the writing is within the varieties of disciplinary and national research cultures. He illustrates these themes through corpus linguistic evidence of some textual features indicating certainty and assertiveness of claims as well as of lexical variation. These indications that textual variation does exist begin to suggest how writing is reduced within and for local social and institutional contexts, and is indeed part of the practices that are carried out within, maintain, and even construct those contexts. Understanding these processes more fully can contribute to education and aiding researchers to build careers and reputations as researchers, particularly in the world of English language research publication, as Hyland discusses. Understanding these processes also has broader social benefits in improving communicative practices and creating more reliable knowledge. Identifying lexical variation is a first step indicating social complexity, but a fuller inquiry requires other kinds of data that go beyond the text.

In Chapter 2, Hyland considers some of the textual means by which the author can adjust relationships to readers and identity within a discipline. These include drawing on disciplinary literatures, using disciplinary ways of using language, positioning the claims within the ideologies of the field and asserting the novelty of claims. He offers examples of how various research authors display and manage textual resources to carry out these functions. Such enumerations of issues and exemplification can guide writers to attend to relationships and identity with a field and can direct them to the linguistic resources that will aid their representation. Deploying textual resources can help researchers make the most of what they have, but first they must know what they have to work with and the playing field they are working on. They must also know how to create the knowledge goods that will make a difference in the market, before they craft a final representation in the article. Elucidating such issues, as Hyland knows, requires other kinds of inquiries and data. I would note that Hyland does preface his discussion of textual resources with a discussion over the nature of disciplinary, coming up with uncertainty about the definition of disciplines. Inquiring, however, into disciplines as varieties of social configurations having at times institutional status and certain forms of institutionalized organization often conditioning publication outlets, rather than seeking a fixed definition of disciplines, may allow a deeper understanding of the differing sites which publishing researchers contribute to and act within

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In Chapter 3, Hyland does go beyond the examination of textual corpus in order to understand participation, a concept that can be viewed from both psychological and sociological perspectives. Here he uses interview with novices and experts to see how they perceive writing and review situations, the roles of power and brokers, and how they construct relations with others. The inquiry includes how the interviewees see learning related to participation and mentoring relations they have experienced. The perceptions of such thoroughly social practices are important because these perceptions guide engagement, learning, knowledge and action choice. As Hyland notes in his conclusions, the response to situation is deeper and broader than adopting the linguistic coloration of a chosen speciality. He further notes that students readily recognize and adopt recognizable discursive forms but effective expert writing in a discipline requires extensive processes of engagement in the knowledge, social relations, discussions and inquiries of a field, shaping the meaning and substance of the representational choices. The actors' perceptions revealed in interviews provide important phenomenological windows onto the communicative choices and practices of the disciplines as well as how they are learned; other windows can give us further insight into the unfolding of communal discussions, processes and patterns that emerge across multiple participants, and the differential consequences of different practices, as well as the relation of these practices to the nature of the knowledge produced, evaluated and disseminated through these practices.

In Chapter 4, Hyland moves beyond generalized participation within disciplinary spaces to consider the formation of distinct individualized personalities. These personalities embody stances towards academic tasks, a field's knowledge and ideas, relations with one's colleagues and assertiveness of one's own claims. Using a corpus formed from the publications of two prominent applied linguists of widely recognized distinctive personalities, Deborah Cameron and John Swales, Hyland examines how the authors manage resources to represent coherent and consistent individualized personalities within disciplinary boundaries. There is, however, no separate analysis to confirm that patterns found in early publication match later; the assumption of continuity is based only on the aggregate weight of the evidence. Hyland does, nonetheless, find distinctive, patterned differences between the two and which vary from disciplinary norms in particular word choice and word strings that contribute to authorial stances. Cameron's challenging, confident stance is managed through the use of *is*, boosting and evaluative infinitives, negations and adversative and concessive conjunctions among other features. Swales projects a reflexive modesty through use of the first person (*I* limiting assertions to personal views and the inclusive *we* showing affiliation with readers), statements of uncertainty, hedges, boosters

While the positions and stances one can credibly take and maintain depend on such things as the substance of the knowledge and concepts of the field, the nature of each individual's inquiry, the relation to the group inquiry, one's history of contributions and institutional location, and the concrete contributions one has to offer, these linguistic tools of personality management can present an authorial personality consistent with these underlying factors to establish professional presence. While Hyland documents that the largest number of distinctive words used by each of the subjects refers to the terrain they study and make claims about, he does not analyse them. Such an analysis would require going beyond the immediate texts in the corpus to examine the conceptual, epistemic and social structure of the field as well as of the individuals relation to them, which would require different kinds of data as well as analytic tools.

Hyland opens a door for applied linguists to look beyond the texts, to see that competence in producing effective texts requires knowing more than language resources in order to make effective textual choices within specific situations. As he recognizes, walking through this door requires both awareness of literatures of the fields that have explored the domains where communication occurs and investigative tools to understand these situations more fully. In so doing he disrupts in substantial and consequential ways the *langue/parole* distinction that facilitated the study of language as an autonomous stable object. Hyland's vision recognizes that *langue* is only a codification of what is deployed within *parole* and comprehensive knowledge of *langue* alone does not make effective users of language. Language education to make effective language users must go beyond *langue*, and not just peer out from world of *langue*. Language education needs to gather evidence of that great world of language use beyond and develop systematic methods of inquiry and analysis.