

Research-grounded support of  
student learning in higher  
education: The importance of  
dialogue and subject-embedded  
contextualised language and  
content

Kendall Richards

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements of Edinburgh Napier  
University, for the award of Doctor of  
Philosophy

February 2018

## Abstract

This aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how the research that has been conducted by the author, as illustrated through the publications presented, adds to the domain of academic support – specifically the theory and practice of academic support within UK higher education institutions. The core of the work is a series of publications, each the outcome of research studies led (in a turn-taking approach) by the author, which present individual and cumulative insights set out using the metaphor of the ‘journey’. Although dominant assumptions (abstract objectivist approaches) around academic support claim to consider the importance of context and dialogue for language and support, they inevitably fail to do so because they see language as essentially stable and immutable. Through qualitative research, with research findings continually applied to practice through ‘reflections on action’, this thesis presents the argument that an acknowledgement of, and engagement with, the heart of a subject is necessary for successful skills support (individual subjectivist approach). Critically examining subject attributes for success, and further considering the deeper existential bases of subjects, the thesis establishes the concept of the ‘paradigmatic heart’ of subjects including design, nursing, business and computing. The psychological and ideological elements of the paradigmatic hearts of these subjects are explored and the value of engaging with these for academic support and learning purposes represents the main contribution to knowledge of the work. The thesis includes a critical reflection of nine publications in the field, which show a progression in the author’s position of how the support of student learning and success should be conducted through approaches from within an individual subjectivist paradigm. The author’s contribution to the academic understanding of the field of individual subjectivist learning support is demonstrated through reflections on the publications’ contributions.



## **Acknowledgements**

**I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Sally Smith and Dr Colin Smith for their support and encouragement throughout the process of the compilation of this thesis. Feedback and guidance were always timely and welcome. I would also like to express gratitude to friend and colleague Dr Nick Pilcher and Dr Robyn Bray who offered valuable advice on this work. Finally, but not least to my family Fiona, David and Samuel for continual tolerance and support throughout this academic journey.**

## Table of Abbreviations

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| AL                 | Academic Literacies   |
| AO                 | Abstract Objectivist  |
| ATLAANZ<br>Zealand | Association of Teaching, Learning and Language Advisers New Zealand |
| CAPRI              | Centre for Academic Practice and Research in Internationalisation   |
| CICIN              | Centre for Internationalised Curriculum and Networking              |
| DPJ                | Dialogic Pedagogy Journal   |
| EAP                | English for Academic Purposes                                       |
| EFL                | English as a Foreign Language                                       |
| EMI                | English as a Medium of Instruction                                  |
| ESP                | English for Specific Purposes                                       |
| HE                 | Higher Education  |
| HEI                | Higher Education Institution  |
| HERDSA             | Higher Education Research Development Society Australia             |
| IELTS              | International English Language Testing System                       |
| IS                 | Individual Subjectivist   |
| QSE                | Qualitative Studies in Education                                    |
| SHEFC              | Scottish Higher Education Funding Council                           |
| WAP                | Widening Access Premium   |



# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table of Abbreviations .....   | 5  |
| 1. Introduction .....  | 10 |
| 1.1. Research Rhizome, and Journey .....   | 13 |
| 1.2. Overview of Publications .....  | 16 |
| 1.3. Aims and Objectives .....   | 20 |
| 1.4. Overview and Structure .....  | 20 |
| 2. Literature Review .....   | 24 |
| 2.2. Development of Approaches to Learning Support .....   | 25 |
| 2.3. Institutional Discourse on Student Skills .....   | 32 |
| 2.4. Approaches to Supporting Student Skill Acquisition .....  | 33 |
| 2.4.1. Corpus Linguistics .....  | 34 |
| 2.4.2. Academic Literacies .....   | 35 |
| 2.4.3. English for Academic Purposes .....   | 37 |
| 2.4.4. The 'English' of a Subject .....  | 39 |
| 2.6. Conclusion .....  | 41 |
| 3. Methodology .....   | 43 |
| 3.1. Introduction .....  | 43 |
| 3.2. Research Paradigm .....   | 44 |
| 3.2.1. Ontology .....  | 45 |
| 3.2.2. Epistemology .....  | 47 |
| 3.2.3. Axiology .....  | 49 |
| 3.2.4. Research Methods .....  | 49 |
| 4. Publications .....  | 58 |
| 4.1. From Dunedin to Dunedin: Supporting Students in the Changing World of<br>Higher Education .....                 | 65 |
| 4.1.2. Theoretical Start Point .....   | 65 |
| 4.1.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding .....  | 66 |
| 4.2. Contextualising Higher Education Assessment Task Words with an 'Anti-<br>glossary' Approach .....               | 68 |
| 4.2.1. Background and Research Approach .....  | 68 |
| 4.2.2. Theoretical Start Point .....   | 69 |
| 4.2.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding .....  | 70 |
| 4.3. Discuss, Analyse, Define... Non-Traditional Students Come to Terms with<br>Cultures of Learning in the UK ..... | 73 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 4.3.1. Background and Research Approach .....   | 73  |
| 4.3.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding .....   | 75  |
| 4.4. Avoiding Dialogues of Non-Discovery Through Promoting Dialogues of<br>Discovery .....  | 76  |
| 4.4.1. Background and Research Approach .....   | 76  |
| 4.4.2. Theoretical Start Point .....  | 77  |
| 4.4.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding .....   | 78  |
| 4.5. Deconstructing ‘Mono’-Lingualism: Considerations of Value for ‘English’<br>‘Language’ Education in a Global Setting .....  | 80  |
| 4.5.1. Background and Research Approach .....   | 80  |
| 4.5.2. Theoretical Start Point .....  | 81  |
| 4.6. An Individual Subjectivist Critique of the use of Corpus Linguistics to<br>Inform Pedagogical Materials .....  | 83  |
| 4.6.1. Background and Research Approach .....   | 83  |
| 4.6.2. Theoretical Start Point .....  | 84  |
| 4.6.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding .....   | 85  |
| 4.7. The Paradigmatic Hearts of Subjects Which Their ‘English’ Flows<br>Through .....   | 87  |
| 4.7.1. Background and Research Approach .....   | 87  |
| 4.7.2. Theoretical Start Point .....  | 88  |
| 4.7.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding .....   | 88  |
| 4.8. Academic Literacies: The Word is not Enough.....   | 90  |
| 4.8.1. Background and Research Approach .....   | 90  |
| 4.8.2. Theoretical Start Point .....  | 90  |
| 4.8.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding .....   | 91  |
| 4.9. Challenging Power Invested in the International English Language Testing<br>System (IELTS): Why Determining ‘English’ Preparedness Needs to Be<br>Undertaken Within the Subject Context..... | 93  |
| 4.9.1. Background and Research Approach .....   | 93  |
| 4.9.2. Theoretical Start Point .....  | 94  |
| 4.9.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding .....   | 95  |
| 4.10. Conclusion .....  | 97  |
| 5. Conclusions and Contribution to the Field of Supporting Student Learning .....   | 99  |
| 5.1 Introduction .....  | 99  |
| 5.2 Aims and Objectives of this Thesis.....   | 99  |
| 5.3 Limitations.....  | 104 |
| 5.4 Further Research Opportunities .....  | 109 |
| 5.5 Conclusion .....  | 109 |



|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 6. Appendices .....   | 111 |
| 6.1. Publications for PhD .....                             | 111 |
| 6.2. Co-authorship Declaration .....                        | 113 |
| 6.3. Sample list of workshops delivered by invitation ..... | 114 |
| 7. References.....  | 116 |

# 1. Introduction

This thesis for a PhD by publication aims to retrospectively construct a body of work from a critical contextual perspective. For this reason, the approach and structure are different to those of more traditional PhD theses. Rather than a single in-depth investigation of a subject, this PhD by publication presents eight publications from within a ten-year time frame for critical evaluation and scrutiny. However, although eight publications are included in this thesis for scrutiny, nine publications are presented in total. This is because the first publication (Godfrey & Richards, 2006), which falls outside of the ten-year limit, is also included to represent the starting point of the publication journey. This first publication is representative of abstract objectivist (AO) approaches to supporting student learning, while the following eight publications demonstrate the evolution of the author's thinking and how the research evolved and developed during the course of the research journey.

Voloshinov (1973) observes that language can be viewed through two approaches: AO, or individualistic subjectivist (IS). AO approaches were most strongly reflected in the work of the Geneva School of Linguistics and Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), who stated that "language, unlike speaking, is something we can study separately [...] language is homogeneous [...] language is concrete" (Saussure, 1959, p. 76). Thus, language is seen as an entity that is concrete and that can be analysed and taught away from its context when working within the AO paradigm (Voloshinov, 1973). In contrast, IS approaches hold that "the basis of language (meaning all linguistic manifestations without exception) to be the individual creative act of speech. The source of language is the individual psyche" (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 48). Through this lens, language can be viewed as creative, and – akin to other ideological phenomena – context is key, so meaning can only be provided in the context of the subject itself. For example, for a nurse the word 'empathy' may be ideologically related to feelings towards their patients' wellbeing,

whereas a designer may use this term in relation to finding a suitable solution to satisfy their clients. As Voloshinov (1973) explains: “the linguistic form [...] exists for the speaker only in the context of specific utterances [...] only in a specific ideological context”. Furthermore, as Bakhtin (1981, p. 293) later elaborated,

All words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived, its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones are inevitable in the word.

Thus, “language is activity, an unceasing process of creation realized in individual speech acts [...] As a ready-made product, as a stable system, is, so to speak, the inert crust, the hardened lava of language creativity” when it is considered as an IS entity (Voloshinov, Matejka, & Titunik, 1973, p. 48). In contrast, language is a “stable, immutable system of normatively identical linguistic forms [...]. The laws of language are the specifically linguistic laws of connection between linguistic signs within a given, closed linguistic system” when viewed through an AO lens (p. 56). Resultantly, these two contrasting paradigms involve very different approaches to the study and teaching of language in Higher Education (HE). For example, writing can be analysed and taught outside its context from the perspective of the AO approach, because it is constructed from a homogenous concrete entity, although this could not be attempted from an IS approach, as this would deny the individual psyche of the author as the creator of the text.

The research presented here critiques approaches to learning support that the author argues can be seen as following the AO approach, rather than the IS, and it argues that these approaches have had significant influence on the provision of learning support for students in HE. The publications critiqued in this thesis contribute towards developing student learning support in HE by

identifying gaps in the understanding of the nature of student support when it is solely viewed through the AO lens. Furthermore, they demonstrate that there is a false assumption, or category error, that holds that practices congruent with the AO approach can be used to support student learning and create tools and materials to support student learning. Thus, the publications aim to critique this approach by examining the weaknesses inherent in the dominant AO approach; common approaches such as academic literacies (AL), study skills and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) are each critically examined and found to not meet the needs of students needing learning support. The focus on text is also considered as part of an AO approach commonly used to assess students' readiness for study in university, with the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examined as an example of this.

The research findings are valuable as there has been little previous analysis and critique of this nature in the literature; therefore, this work contributes to the field of student learning and support in HE. Furthermore, this work highlights that there has been a lack of recognition that the dominant approaches to student learning and support have been heavily influenced by the AO paradigm. Thus, the research is important for contributing to the body of knowledge concerning the provision of student learning and support at university and for developing effective strategies for supporting learning and student success. While it is often assumed that students can go on to use the knowledge gained from study skills workshops and materials in a number of subject-specific settings (Jordan, 1997; Swales & Feak, 2004), or that centralised 'skills' centres can use experts to embed curriculum-integrated writing with linguistic techniques, such as genre analysis (Wingate, 2015), the research that was presented in these publications would suggest otherwise.

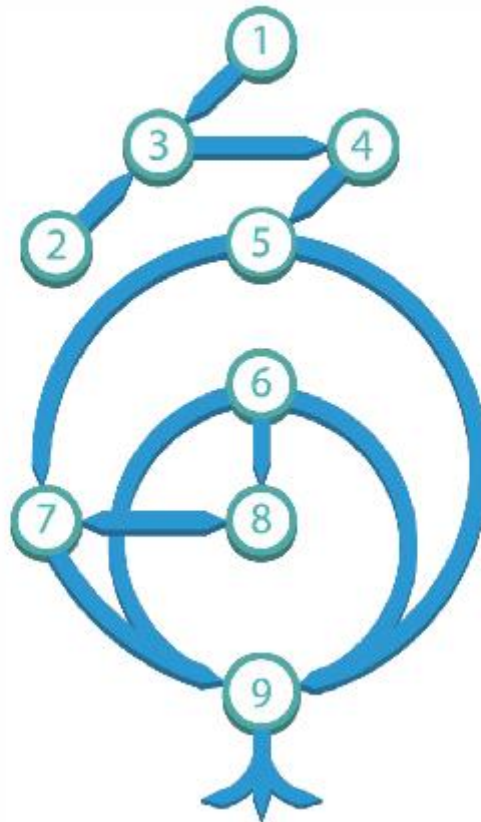
The continuing research and publication of these publications has not only contributed to the field in terms of challenging the effectiveness of the

approaches that are part of the AO paradigm for student support, but this work has also been central to the author's own academic practice and development within the IS paradigm. The publications included are presented through the metaphor of a journey, which illustrates the author's development from a position of following an AO model of support for student learning and success, such as is commonly found in British universities, to that of an IS approach. Indeed, using the IS lens to view student support has led to the author questioning the tools often used to create student support materials, such as corpus linguistics, and approaches to student assessments, including IELTS. These papers have been selected as they best illustrate the author's ideological journey as experienced through the research process, with the purpose of presenting a body of work as a contribution to the field of developing student learning and success. Ultimately, these findings help to improve our understanding of best practice when supporting students through study skills centre workshops, one-to-one support sessions, creating materials and handouts, and publishing online study skills resources, study books, and guides.

### 1.1. Research Rhizome, and Journey

The research journey that the publications represent could not be described as linear, as the approaches taken moved through several paradigmatic shifts due to a number of, what Fecho (2011) describes as, 'wobbles', which is "a calling to attention, a provocation to response. When something wobbles – a wheel on a car [...] the Earth on its axis – we notice. It causes us to stare and notice" (p. 53). This pause and uncertainty makes us question what is happening and what we do, as "wobble taps us on the shoulder and induces us to ask why" (ibid.). In this case, the 'wobble' began with a meeting with a group of Chinese students and a separate group of direct entrant, non-traditional students (described in detail in Chapter 4), which drew attention to the approach being used for the provision of learning support for these and other students and led the author to question this provision.

This shifting research process is best illustrated in the form of a rhizome (Figure 1), where each set of findings can be seen to have fed into the next. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 24) describe rhizomes in the natural world as ecological systems of growth. Indeed, rhizomes have no top or bottom as they are adaptive organisms “whose growth involves problem-solving processes in that they work at a local level to resolve blockages and breakdowns”. Similarly, Taylor & Robinson (2009, p. 194) describe rhizomes as a natural form or being which, in their growth and movement, can spread in any direction and move through levels and scales. This natural model makes it possible to represent the links between the projects and the development of the approach, discussed in section 1.2 below. Furthermore, the rhizome is a useful concept with which to explore the ways that the doctoral journey opens its participants to multiple, iterative and heterogeneous ways of knowing, becoming and telling.



1 Godfrey, H., & Richards, K. (2006). 'From Dunedin to Dunedin: Supporting students in the changing world of higher education.' In G. Grigg & C. Bond (Eds.)

2 Richards, K and Pilcher, N (2013) 'Contextualizing higher education assessment task words with an 'anti-glossary' approach' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*.

3 Richards, K and Pilcher, N (2013) 'Discuss, Analyse, Define.....Non-Traditional Students Come to Terms with Cultures of Learning in the UK. In Jin, L., & Cortazzi, M. (Eds). *Researching Intercultural Learning: Investigations in Language and Education*.

4 Richards, K, and Pilcher, N (2015) 'Aligning expectations and knowledge of the usage of key assessment task words: avoiding dialogues of non-discovery through promoting dialogues of discovery' *Dialogic Pedagogy Journal*.

5 Pilcher, N and Richards, K (2015) 'Deconstructing 'Mono'-Lingualism: Considerations of Value for 'English' 'Language' Education in a Global Setting.' In Wong, L. T., & Dubey-Jhaveri, A. (Eds).

6 Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2016). An individual subjectivist critique of the use of corpus linguistics to inform pedagogical materials. *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal*, 4.

7 Pilcher, N, and Richards, K (2016) 'The Paradigmatic hearts of subjects which their 'English' flows through' *Journal of Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)*.

8 Richards, K., & Pilcher, N, (2017) 'Academic literacies: the word is not enough. *Teaching in Higher Education*.

9 Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2017). Challenging the power invested in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Why determining 'English' preparedness needs to be undertaken within the subject context. *Power and Education*.

Figure 1: Rhizome representation of the research journey, with details of publications

Mackenzie & Ling (2009, p. 48) describe the process of undertaking a research study and liken it to a journey. They discuss the experience of working as supervisee and supervisor throughout the various stages of doctoral research and thesis writing by retrospectively and reflexively creating meaning and understanding of the journeys involved. In this case, the authors learn about themselves and their experiences through the process of writing about the research journey and using language as a “constitutive force, creating a particular view of reality and of the self”. However, of particular interest is how they describe the development of the research process, where “methodology emerges throughout the process” (Mackenzie & Ling 2009, p. 49). This concept of emergent research is described by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006, p. xi) as “the logical conclusion to paradigm shifts, major developments in theory, and new conceptions of knowledge and the knowledge-building process”. Therefore, the journey metaphor is an accurate description of the process of arriving at this stage of a research journey: that of writing this thesis based on the paradigm shifts created through a number of research projects and publications, which have led to the current theoretical and professional positioning. The theoretic journey and outline are further described in the literature review.

## 1.2. Overview of Publications

The nine publications presented here come from an increasingly wider body of work (three new publications have appeared since starting this thesis and there are three further papers currently under review) that has been co-authored by the author since 2006 (a comment on co-authorship is provided in Chapter 4 and Appendix 7.2). The research process and writing of the publications presented have been instrumental in the author’s development in relation to research and theoretical advancement and positioning.



The first publication presented in this thesis is Godfrey & Richards (2008), represented as (1) in Figure 1, which has been included here as an example of what the author now believes to be part of the AO paradigm that shares much in common with many other publications in the field (e.g. Percy & Skillen, 2001; Trotter & Cove, 2005). The co-author was a colleague at that time and this publication, for a conference journal, was based on programmes and approaches to supporting learning that we collaborated on. The focus of this paper was the 'embedded' approach to support and learning, where study skills are embedded within subject disciplines. Although this publication falls outside the census dates, it is included as an embarkation point in terms of the metaphor of a research journey.

Then, after a meeting with two separate groups of students (as described in Chapter 4) regarding approaches to teaching and the provision of study skills and learning support, the author started a research project to investigate how students and lecturers from different disciplines and backgrounds might interpret common assessment task words used in HE. The second publication (2) is the result of this project (Richards & Pilcher, 2014), while the third (3) is a book chapter focusing on researching intercultural learning (Richards & Pilcher, 2013). In the chapter, the authors take the research data from the project and consider it within the paradigm of non-traditional students and international students (Chinese, in this case), although the chapter was published before the article, hence the numbering used in Figure 1. The findings from the original focus groups suggest that the differences between the non-traditional and international students are minimal, in contrast to assumed cultures of learning (e.g. Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Rastall, 2006 and Hofstede, 1984).

The fourth publication (4) branches off from the first three, since it represents a move towards a developing awareness of the existence of AO and IS approaches (Voloshivov, 1973). This was the result of viewing the research

and results from the second publication (2) through a dialogic lens (Bakhtin, 1981). This paper was presented at a Bakhtin international conference and resulted in an invitation to write an article for the *Dialogic Pedagogy Journal* (DPJ). The conference attendance and the process of writing for the journal allowed for significant and meaningful dialogue with a number of international academics in the field and led to the development of the idea of dialogues of non-discovery in teaching and learning.

One of the presenters and researchers at the Bakhtin conference was a Korean-Australian academic, whose interests included the impact of language and culture on learning and the trend in non-English-speaking countries of providing native students with lessons using English as a medium of instruction (EMI). This led to a research collaboration and an invitation to write a chapter in a book intended for new lecturers in HE in South Korea, which is intended as a guide and academic reference for EMI practice (Richards and Pilcher, 2017). This also led to a reconsideration of what exactly 'English' is, and, in particular, whether there is truly a monolingual English, a theme pursued in the fifth publication (5) (Pilcher & Richards, 2015), an invited chapter in a book that investigates English language education in a global world.

The consideration of 'English' in academic learning and support (5) led to a new research project involving interviews and focus groups with academics from four different subject disciplines. Thus, publication (7) argues that "the specific subject 'context' is fundamentally linked with the 'English' used within it" (Pilcher & Richards, 2016). This was a direct link in terms of a journey from publication (5), but it was published after the publication of the sixth paper (6). The argument presented in (7) is that if students are not being taught English in the context of their subject, the language they shall need to use will be different, and, therefore, the preparation and support needs to be undertaken in the subject area itself. This is a highly significant finding as it

leads towards the development of an understanding of the importance of the IS paradigm.

Publication (6) (Richards and Pilcher, 2016) explores the use of tools, such as corpus linguistics, in AL and EAP to develop materials to support students at university. This publication stands alone in figure 1, as its title directly refers to the IS approach and it represents a significant stage in the journey metaphor. This research develops further the concepts of the IS and AO approaches when supporting student learning and when developing materials.

Publication (8) (Richards & Pilcher, 2017) continues the development of the IS approach by considering AL and how there is too great a focus on the written word within AL practice. This research suggests that writing is just one facet that is required within the diversity of disciplines and that different subject areas use similar words in very different ways, often with differing underpinning psychological elements and approaches to teaching and assessment.

Publication (9) (Pilcher and Richards, 2017) is the final publication included as part of this thesis and it challenges the effectiveness of testing for international students (IELTS, in this case) and identifies that this practice is aligned to the AO approach, which removes language from its subject-discipline context. This research considers the 'English' required in different subjects and the thinking underpinning it, presenting the results around three themes: how English is specific to subject content; how the English used in different subjects is underpinned by unique ideological and psychological elements; and how the non-textual elements of different subjects are intertwined with their own English. The results illustrate a need to challenge the 'power' invested in IELTS, and why determining English preparedness is best undertaken within the subject context (Pilcher & Richards, 2017).

The bottom branches of the rhizome diagram in Figure 1 represent the continuation of the author's research and dialogic journey, with a number of other papers and chapters in the process of being written, or already out for review. Since writing this thesis, other papers have been accepted and are due for publication shortly, for example in the IATEFL English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Special Interest Group journal (*ESP SIG Journal*, 46).

### 1.3. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this thesis are to demonstrate the author's understanding and contribution to knowledge in the area of supporting student learning and to define and contextualise the contribution made in the field. This is done through the development of an illustration of how the research journey has developed and contributed towards the author's evolving understanding of the conceptual, theoretical and learning approach practices through:

- 1) Critical reflection on the literature, including the over-arching paradigms of AO and IS approaches
- 2) Evaluation of student learning support practices in the UK
- 3) Contextualisation and substantiation of methodological approaches deployed in the work
- 4) Synthesis of the contribution made in the area of study
- 5) Assessment of the contribution to knowledge

### 1.4. Overview and Structure

In order to provide a framework for the critical analysis of the publications and the contributions they make, Chapter 2 considers theory from the perspective of developing learning support approaches to provide a conceptual background for examining the area and the publications. A

number of perspectives are considered, including the development of approaches to supporting student learning historically and institutionally such as: development of the 'skills agenda' (Leggett, Kinnear, Boyce & Bennett, 2004; Williams, 2005); theoretical underpinnings of various approaches to supporting student learning and success such as skills development and scaffolding (Miller, 1998), academic 'apprenticeship' (Wenger, 1998), academic discourse (Griffin, 2007) and discourse markers (Swales, 1990); AL, discourse and dialogism; and linguistic perspectives. This leads to a discussion of Bakhtin's (1982) dialogic theories and Voloshinov's (1973) focus on context, and the proposal based on these generic models of AO and IS approaches to student learning and support.

The theory of AO and IS paradigms to language and learning support are useful in considering the existing approaches to supporting student learning and success that are seen to have started from the concept of students being able to absorb the required skills, by a process of 'osmosis' (Chapple & Tolley, 2000; Johnston, 2003; Skillen et al., 1998), throughout their education or through learning centres' generic study skills workshops and materials, or from study skills classes taught in the subject curriculum through an embedded approach. This is followed by a consideration of the institutional discourses on study skills (Court (2004), for example) and how this tends to focus on the development of textually-mediated skills provision, which holds that it is necessary to identify these study skills as part of a set of core skills to be supported through generic and embedded courses and the provision of materials (Bridges, 1993). The Chapter continues with a review of the theories and approaches that focus on the development of materials to support study skills, such as corpus linguistics (Hyland, 2008; McEneaney & Hardie, 2012), AL (Lillis & Scott, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998), EAP (Wingate, 2012) and, finally, the subject-specific nature of the specific 'English' unique to individual subjects.

Following the literature review, in Chapter 3 the overall research stance is presented through consideration of research methodologies and an introduction to the range of research techniques and approaches used in the research projects from which the publications evolved. The underlying interpretive perspective comes from a qualitative paradigm that informs ontological positions, epistemology and axiology. According to Bryman (2008), qualitative paradigms offer the researcher the opportunity to develop an idiographic understanding of participants living with a particular condition or be in a particular situation and what this means for them within their social reality. The methodologies applied in the research process are contextualised as the data sets utilised for each research project are presented. As this is a PhD by publication, the research projects were developed and used for specific publications and developed over time. The original research project was grounded in a constructivist paradigm and the other projects developed from this and took elements from alternative enquiry paradigms.

Four research projects (leading to the creation of four data sets) were used to inform the publications included in this thesis, and the methods and approaches used to gather data were qualitative and interpretive. The interpretivist approach is based on naturalistic approaches to data collection, such as interviews and focus groups (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008 p. 4). The data collection details for the research projects are presented in Table 2 and the research approaches for each publication are set out in Table 3, which gives an overview of each publication's research approach, theoretical standpoint and contribution to theory/understanding. The methodological and philosophical process is outlined in order to consider the 'methods landscape' of the publications. This is done by considering the research paradigm (qualitative) informing the ontological positions, epistemology and axiology. The Chapter also considers how an extended research programme supports and enables theoretical development and paradigmatic development over time.

In Chapter 4, the individual publications are critically appraised in order to highlight their contribution to the thesis. The Chapter establishes the specific contribution of the author in the context of joint authorship, showing how the process of collaboration is important in developing a dialogue of discovery within the research and writing. The publications are considered in the order shown in Figure 1 and are critiqued under three main headings: 'Background and Research Approach' considers the original ideas or events leading to the publication and the research approach taken; 'Theoretical Start Point' assesses the theories and previous research that provided the foundation for each publication; and 'Contribution to Theory and Understanding' establishes practical and theoretical outcomes of value to the academic and practitioner community for each publication.

Finally, the conclusion in Chapter 5 returns to the aims and objectives stated in the introduction and offers a final appraisal of how each of these have been met by demonstrating the ways in which the thesis has contributed to an understanding of the academic field of student learning and support. The key threads found in the literature are also summarised and further research opportunities are highlighted.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

Since the year 2000, there has been significant interest in developing and supporting student learning in Higher Education Institutions (HEI). A report by the Scottish Funding Council on widening opportunities recognised the skills gap for students moving from further education to HE (Dundas, Maclennan, & Musselbrook, 2000). One result of this has been the establishment of learning support positions in universities with the aim of addressing a 'skills deficit' by increasing the support for lifelong learning, non-traditional students, international students and students transitioning to HEIs from schools and colleges. However, Leggett, Kinnear, Boyce & Bennett (2004, p. 298) show that universities responded to the challenge of the 'skills agenda' or 'deficit' in a variety of ways. This response to the challenge can be seen in the early 2000s, when many institutions first started to introduce skills development sessions or units providing centralised and generic study skills, ranging in size from introductory lectures to skills workshops. After this, there was a move from the centralised, generic provision of study skills drop-ins and materials towards teaching these skills in study skills lectures and courses. However, these still taught the skills removed from context, rather than teaching them within the subjects themselves, and were, therefore, technically developed from what the author now considers as AO approaches. For example, it could be argued that this focus on written text neglects the importance of context (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) and dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981) within language and learning support.

The following review of literature considers the research domain surrounding the development of types of student skills and academic support paradigms within HE. Theories relating to the development of student language and learning, including Bakhtin's (1982) process of dialogue, are examined first.



The review then focuses specifically on the work of Voloshinov (1973) in relation to the development of the AO and IS approaches to language. Next, the institutional discourse on student skills is discussed, followed by approaches to supporting student skill acquisition, including specifically: corpus linguistics, AL, EAP, and a consideration of what constitutes the actual 'English' used in subject disciplines. These approaches are selected for inclusion in the literature review as they are common practices used in supporting student learning in HE. In this chapter, a critical reflection on the literature is conducted in order to develop a theoretical framework for better understanding the field of student learning support and how this has developed. This review provides conceptual background and support for the presentation of the research methodologies and the contribution of the publications to the field of learning support.

## 2.2. Development of Approaches to Learning Support

Before the introduction of dedicated learning support staff, a number of concerns were raised about the ability of some students to understand key academic discourses, such as the task words used in assessment questions. Williams (2005, p. 169) notes that, in order to overcome these differences, lecturers in subject disciplines had "developed handouts that explain[ed] what common assessment verbs mean". These handouts were intended as a response to the problem highlighted by Miller, Imrie, & Cox, (1998, p. 105), that "many of the words have different meanings when used in other contexts". Dictionary definitions neutralise words, as their real meaning and expression "does not inhere in the word itself. It originates at the point of contact between the word and actual reality, under the conditions of that real situation articulated by the individual utterance" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 88). Thus, context is key, for, as Voloshinov (cited in Morris, 1994, p. 33) also notes, "the linguistic form [...] exists for the speaker only in the context of specific utterances [...] only in a specific ideological context".

Therefore, to explore the differences in the specific meanings of words in varying academic contexts, Williams (2005, p. 170) indicates the need for “apprenticed, scaffolded participation”, requiring more detailed dialogue between staff and students – a point that was also made by Miller et al. (1998). Theoretically, language has a number of rules, meaning that it can be likened to a game, both linguistically (Saussure, 1959) and philosophically (Wittgenstein, 1953). The key point Wittgenstein makes is that it is necessary to know the rules of a game, or language, in order to play it successfully. Borges (1979, p. 33) argues that we might not understand words in the same way as others in a dialogue, as words are symbols with assumed, shared memory and one’s assumed memory can be different from those one is communicating with, or the language may have changed. Therefore, problems inevitably occur when discourse is removed from its context to create classes, materials, word lists and so on to support student learning.

Bakhtin (1982) suggests that the dialogic process has many theoretical and practical justifications. Theoretically, it is likely that both international students and non-traditional students will come from a background that had its own specific method, or ‘ethnography’, of communication (Hymes, 1964; Saville-Troike, 2003). Yet these students may be joining a cohort in which many existing members have had the benefit of an ‘apprenticeship’ (in their schools, for example) in the language and discourse specific to the discipline and the institution they now study within (Saussure, 1959; Wenger, 1998), which provides them with a distinct advantage. Those who take a traditional route to HE may have greater knowledge and experience of the language and discourse of HE, allowing them a smoother transition, while those who take non-traditional routes, such as direct-entry and/or international students, may have had very different experiences.

The process of dialogue, or ‘dialogism’ (Bakhtin, 1982; Marková & Linell, 2006), advocates that understandings of words are negotiated between users

in a social constructivist process that 'scaffolds' (Donato, 1994; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) learning in a conversational framework (Laurillard, 2012). It is within this framework that teachers communicate, model and practice understandings of words (Laurillard, 2012). This allows them to help learners in a face-to-face context (Palincsar, 1998), and within their Vygotskian zone of proximal development, namely, "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). This process helps students to understand the 'rules of the game' and to gain the necessary apprenticeship and essential confidence they need to succeed (Griffin, 2007; Yorke, 2003). For students from diverse backgrounds, this can be empowering (Cummins, 1986), especially if the specific type of social constructivist approach adopted is a diverse one (as opposed to a mainstream one), where the ethnicity, primary language and social class of a diverse body of students are harnessed (Au, 1998).

Such a process also assumes that words can never be considered 'complete', 'finished' or 'set', as meanings continually change over time (Bakhtin, 1982; Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Saussure, 1959), take time to acquire (Laurillard, 1997), and form a part of a language that is a social artefact (Schwandt, 1994). Practically, the concept of dialogism has been drawn upon in the area of AL (e.g. Lillis, 2003), as well as in disciplines such as strategic management (Vaara, 2010) and psychology (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011), and, as shown above, by Williams (2005) in the field of pedagogy. Dialogue is also an integral element of social constructivist approaches to helping students understand assessment processes (Rust et al. 2005) and marking criteria (Hendry, Bromberger, & Armstrong, 2011). These various examples in the literature, amongst others, show how essential it is that such a process occurs within a discipline-specific context.

In terms of language and learning support, examples of the importance of understanding words in context can be seen in approaches to EAP and study skills – such as identifying key words, assessment task words and subject-specific language for research purposes and teaching, or for creating study guides and glossaries for students. The learning support provided in HE includes centralised learning support for home and international students with a focus on generic classes, bridging and other pre-entry programmes and centrally provided learning support, drop-ins and materials provided during term time; this could be considered as an institutional approach to supporting student learning. The belief is that the student, having obtained these skills, will be able to apply them to different academic settings regardless of their individual discipline. Indeed, much research into linguistics and language is also based on this assumption – for example, corpus linguistics deals with huge bodies of separated text that is fed into computers to produce frequency lists (e.g. McEnery and Hardie, 2011), while genre analysis examines separated text (usually written, occasionally oral) for key discourse markers and linguistic moves (Swales, 1990).

Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was one of the first to attempt to compile a comprehensive dictionary of the English language (Mullan, 2010). However, although he had “set out to fix our language” (Mullan, 2010, p. 3), spending nine years on this task, he found this was impossible due to language’s lively mutability (Hitchings, 2006). In the contemporary era, Borges (1979, p. 33), an Argentinian writer and poet, approached this problem from a literary perspective, suggesting that “words are symbols that assume a shared memory”. Suggesting that one person’s shared memory of a word or words may not be the same memory as that of another can impact on how each person interprets and reacts to the same word. In an academic context, a common academic assessment task word like ‘discuss’ refers to a number of quite complex and differing concepts. However, students will have their own individual understandings of this term, gained from their own experiences and

committed to memory, and may assume that other people are using it in the same way. Therefore, a lecturer may be faced with students from many different educational systems who may use the word 'discuss', or other common terms like 'evaluate', differently than expected.

Indeed, students are likely to perceive certain terms differently from their teachers due to their familiarity with differing contexts (Nelson, 1990, 1995; Lillis, 2003; Williams, 2005; Scaife & Wellington, 2010). This is applicable to international students (Horowitz, 1986) as much as it is to non-traditional students or students who enter directly from school (Lillis, 2003). Many factors can impact on students' understanding of key terms, including their native language and socio-economic background (Corson, 1997), as well as more specific factors, such as their subject discipline, timing, stake-holder (student or teacher), subject year level, assessment question weight, and psychological and philosophical factors (Richards & Pilcher, 2013). In other words, students' individual understandings will be based upon their different backgrounds and assumed shared memories (cf. Borges et al., 1979).

In 1929, Voloshinov published 'Marxism and the philosophy of language', in which he argued that two key trends can be identified in linguistic thought: AO approaches to language and IS approaches to language. The former is grounded in the idea that language is objective and can be detached for analysis and teaching, whereas the latter is grounded in the idea that language is subjective and individual (see table 1). Furthermore, Voloshinov<sup>1</sup> later argued that the assumption that words can be removed from their context is one grounded in an AO view of language that regards it as stable and immutable, that is as a "system of normatively identical forms which the individual consciousness finds ready-made and which is incontestable for that consciousness" (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 57).

---

<sup>1</sup> The name Voloshinov is used throughout thesis, although I acknowledge that the author of some of the works ascribed to Voloshinov may in fact be Mikhail Bakhtin (Morris, 1994).

### **Abstract objectivist approaches**

1. Language is a stable, immutable system of normatively identical linguistic forms that the individual consciousness finds ready-made and which is incontestable for that consciousness. – i.e. words form a scientific system to study and count with one or more stable meaning, even if from different places.
2. The laws of language are the specifically linguistic laws of connection between linguistic signs within a given, closed linguistic system. These laws are objective with respect to any subjective consciousness – i.e. individuals use words according to a closed objective system, thus words represent equal items.
3. Specifically linguistic connections have nothing in common with ideological values (artistic, cognitive, or other). Language phenomena are not grounded in ideological motives. No connection of a kind natural and comprehensible to the consciousness, or of an artistic kind, is obtained between the word and its meaning – i.e. language is neutral, objective and can be scientifically studied.
4. Individual acts of speaking are, from the viewpoint of language, merely fortuitous refractions and variations or plain and simple distortions of normatively identical forms; but precisely these acts of individual discourse explain the historical changeability of linguistic forms, a changeability in itself, from the standpoint of the language system that is irrational and senseless. There is no connection, no sharing of motives, between the system of language and its history. They are alien to one another – i.e. individual variations are anomalies or errors in individual usage of the objective system, only important when embedded in diachronic variation over time.

### **Individual subjectivist approaches**

1. Language is activity, an unceasing process of creation (*energeia*) realised in individual speech acts – i.e. words are individual, unique to context, and cannot be removed for objective study.
2. The laws of language creativity are the laws of individual psychology – i.e. words are used individually, their meaning is unique to each individual and they do not represent equal items in a system.
3. Creativity of language is meaningful creativity, analogous to creative art – i.e. language is individual and subjective, and used in a unique creative way by individuals at the time of usage.
4. Language as a ready-made product (*ergon*), as a stable system (lexicon, grammar, phonetics), is, so to speak, the inert crust, the hardened lava of language creativity, of which linguistics makes an abstract construct in the interests of the practical teaching of language as a ready-made instrument – i.e. words can be counted and accorded importance by frequency. However, this is not possible as words only represent a hardened crust or layer with a great depth of potential meaning beneath.

Table 1. Abstract objectivist and individual subjectivist approaches to language based on Voloshinov (1973)

Arguably, Voloshinov's view of language could be considered as paradigmatic (cf. Kuhn, 1970) as it represents frames for viewing language, or even ontological (cf. Lafford, 2007) in that it views language as being emic (subjective or insider accounts) and individual, rather than as etic (objective or outsider accounts) and structural. In other words, such views will underpin how certain fields or methods regard language and view how it can be analysed and taught. From an IS view of language, language must be taught through dialogue within its context of use, as the meaning and usage of the language is individual and underpinned by creative ideological and psychological elements.

For Voloshinov (1973), consciousness is constituted by language, and it is through dialogue (or dialogicality, according to Bakhtin (2010)) between users of the language that expression of conscious thought and action is constituted. This gives an individual, subjective malleable quality to language and it is exactly this quality of language, its flexibility and chameleon-like nature, that makes it useful: "what is important for the speaker about a linguistic form is not that it is a stable and always self-equivalent signal, but that it is an always changeable and adaptable sign" (Voloshinov, cited in Morris, 2009, p. 33). Bakhtin (1986, p.88) also states that:

We hear those words only in particular individual utterances, we read them in particular individual works, and in such cases the words already have not only a typical, but also (depending on the genre) a more or less clearly reflected individual expression, which is determined by the unrepeatable individual context of the utterance.

Thus, the removal of task words and subject-specific terms from their context for study skills provision and the creation of glossaries and lists creates

conditions that may lend themselves to what the author now considers to be AO approaches in supporting student learning in HE. This paradigm may be further entrenched through institutional discourses on student skill development.

### 2.3. Institutional Discourse on Student Skills

Since devolution in Scotland in 1999, the Scottish Executive (and then the Scottish Government) has conducted a significant number of enquiries, reports and consultations to address the lifelong learning and skills gap agenda (Court, 2004, p. 157). The Cubie Report (1999) promoted access to HE and since then an increasing number of students have entered universities from non-traditional, under-represented and disadvantaged groups (Court, 2004; Johnston, Knox, & MacLeod, 2005; McNicol, 2004). In 2000, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) established the widening access premium (WAP), which rewarded universities that attracted students from non-traditional backgrounds on the basis of numbers. A review in 2001 supported the view that access to HE should be expanded, a culture of lifelong learning encouraged, and it recognised that research leads to economic success (Forum for the Advancement of Continuing Education (FACE), 2003). Lillis & Scott, (2007, p. 7) argue that the emergence of the study skills and life-long learning domain was a response to deficit discourses in the context of an expanding HE system.

Authors (Johnston, 2003; Johnston et al., 2005; Trotter & Cove, 2005) tend to focus on groups of students with the assumption that they will all be different. Study skills and AL tend to discuss 'home', 'non-traditional' or 'direct-entry' students, with several authors highlighting the gulf between college and university. It has been proposed that college students entering university may struggle due to their lack of familiarity with conventions and the discourse they encounter in their specific discipline (e.g., Chapple & Tolley, 2000; Johnston, 2003; Skillen et al., 1999). Furthermore, according to Lillis & Scott



(2007), subject-discipline staff may not always clearly articulate what they expect students to know or do. For some students, there may be a general lack of familiarity about learning at a HE level, but bridging courses, generic study skills centres, workshops and support are assumed to be able to bridge this gap through the acquisition of transferrable skills. These study skills have been considered a part of the necessary core skills for successful study (Bridges, 1993), which suggests that they can be clearly identified and explicitly taught to support student success. The removal of these skills from context for teaching them (study skills, AL and EAP, for example), creates the impression of them being “almost as a curriculum in their own right” (Bridges, 1993, p. 44.).

#### 2.4. Approaches to Supporting Student Skill Acquisition

A number of models of support have been discussed in the literature including: osmosis (where students are expected to gain skills by being exposed to them, e.g, Chapple & Tolley, 2000; Johnston, 2003; Skillen et al., 1998), generic academic support (often characterised in universities by the establishment of a ‘learning centre’ set up in acknowledgement that new students are often not prepared for study, see Skillen et al., 1998, p. 3), and remedial programmes that can be integrated or embedded, (which may use credit-bearing modules that are generic, or can be linked to a subject discipline (ibid.)). An embedded model differs from others in that the relevant academic skills are taught within the subject discipline and embedded in the curriculum (e.g. Skillen, Merten, Trivett, & Percy, 1998). Study skills and AL approaches allow for the creation of study skills materials to be used by students in various academic contexts, but mostly with a focus on text-based settings, such as academic writing, perhaps implying that most required skills are textually mediated. These study skills workshops, support and materials are assumed to be able to objectively abstract key terms and skills from the context of their subject meaning (Volshinov, 1973). However, Hyland & Johnson (1998, p. 164) suggest that:

If key skills are meant to pick out general, transferable skills which are domain-independent (and clearly such wide-ranging applicability is exactly what much skill-talk is wanting to prescribe) then such skills can be shown — on both logical and empirical grounds—to be entirely illusory.

Within the areas of skill development and support there are a number of approaches used to gather key terms and abstract these for analysis apart from the context of the subject discipline. One approach commonly used in EAP, for example, is corpus linguistics.

#### 2.4.1. Corpus Linguistics

Corpus linguistics is one method (cf. McEnery & Hardie, 2012) or research field (Andor, 2004) whereby a corpus of texts is gathered for linguistic analysis, from which lists can be created to support the development of materials and teaching in EAP. McEnery & Hardie (2012, p. 1) define it generally “as dealing with some set of machine-readable texts which is deemed an appropriate basis on which to study a specific set of research questions”. This approach is used extensively in EAP to create lists of words or lexical bundles (Campoy, Cubillo, Belles-Fortunato, & Gea-Valor, 2010) for general (West, 1953), academic (e.g. Coxhead, 2000, McCarthy & O’Dell, 2008; Gardner & Nesi, 2013), and specific language learning purposes (Lee & Swales, 2006, Hyland, 2008; Cheng, 2010). An example of this approach is when a learning and language adviser is approached by a subject lecturer and asked to support students who are completing assessments, perhaps because the students are misunderstanding the task words and/or academic vocabulary required. In this case, the learning and language adviser might ask subject lecturers for texts related to the assessments, as well as coursework descriptors and other supporting documentation, in order to create lists of the relevant academic terms to support student learning.

The premise that one can remove text or materials from the context of the subject discipline is one that can be understood from an AO perspective,

which suggests that these different discourses, terms and texts are part of a fixed system, or skills set, that can be abstracted, taught and learned. Nonetheless, it can be argued that these discourses, terms and texts are not fixed and that individual elements cannot be removed from the context of subject. Furthermore, this approach focuses primarily on text extracted from assessments, coursework descriptors, articles and so on, suggesting that “experience of the human world is largely a textually-mediated experience, and, to that extent, human beings live in a textually mediated world” (McEnery & Hardie, 2012, p. 230). This suggests that text is the main element for communication in assessments, language is stable and immutable, and that it can be removed from its original contexts for the purposes of objective study. However, text-based skills are just one element of a range of subject-specific skills required for student success.

#### 2.4.2. Academic Literacies

AL research is supported by a lively and growing “industry” of journals and conferences, according to Lillis & Scott (2007, p. 6) and Coleman (2016). While AL undoubtedly involves the consideration of social aspects, elements of power and even occasionally of visual elements, all such elements are accessed through the text, i.e. the language is assumed removable and analysable outside its context (Lea and Street, 1998). Thus, an AL approach to supporting and developing student learning is focused on the written text: “Literacy Studies provides a paradigm which is essential in the study of contemporary language use and how it is changing in the textually mediated social world we inhabit” (Barton, 2001, p. 101). The methodological approach within AL is to use the gathered data as the basis of a textual analysis to explore and reveal socio-economic, socio-cultural, critical-discourse perspectives. When it does draw on other methods, such as the visual materials (Adams, 2016) or interviews (Tuck, 2016), these are most often used to shed light on how written text is produced. Thus, even when these other non-textually based elements are seen to be key to student success, they are

too often paid less attention than the production of written text (Coleman, 2016).

Fundamentally, the AL approach “enables the discussion to move beyond both the traditional formulations of both sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics” (Barton, 2001, p. 98), and is, thus, not a study of the language itself, but rather “the study of texts and practices” (Barton 2001, p. 101). For example, the differences in evaluation criteria across different disciplines is something that has been noted generally (Rust, O’Donovan & Price 2005) and also more specifically – for example, in relation to nursing (Gimenez, 2008). In AL research, Lillis and Scott (2007, p. 11) note that “the principal empirical methodology inherent in an ideological model of literacy is that of ethnography, involving both observation of the practices surrounding the production of texts– as well as participants’ perspectives on the texts and practices”. Although it has been acknowledged that AL do not just focus on assessing writing alone (Lea, 2004, p. 739), it is clear that the main concern is most often on activities and materials that are intended to help improve writing skills (e.g. Coleman, 2016). Hence, even though AL consider elements outside the text, this is done to help show how these elements work “surrounding the production of texts” (Lillis and Scott, 2007, p. 11). In an HE context, the meanings of words are linked to the language used in a particular discipline, what that language means for the speaker, and the world setting, or discipline, that the word is a part of (Wittgenstein, 1953).

The embedding of the AL approach has been noted to help “contribute to improved student participation” (Thies 2012, p. 16) and it can help with elements that discipline lecturers cannot. A key theme to such approaches is the need to embed AL practices in the subject areas to allow for “explicit development of Academic Literacies [...] within timetabled classes” (Hillege et al., 2014, p. 687). For example, “it is common to attribute students’ difficulties with reading to poor study habits, lack of effort, general ignorance, and/or

inadequate vocabulary, none of which a discipline lecturer can hope to do anything about” (Chanock et al., 2012). Therefore, AL are said to play a key role in disciplines by helping students understand the written texts, thus making the tacit explicit (Jacobs, 2007). Additionally, there is the importance of creating spaces for “the collaboration of AL practitioners and disciplinary specialists, to facilitate the embedding of AL teaching into disciplines of study” (Jacobs, 2005, p. 475). While key skills can be either integrated, and, thus, domain or programme-dependent, or free-standing and generalisable, they cannot be both at the same time (Hyland & Johnson, 1998 p. 168).

Thus, studying texts and embedding AL in subject disciplines helps students to succeed. Indeed, AL have made a significant contribution to helping students produce written text. However, it can be argued that it is not enough to study a word solely for the purposes of written text production, as text and the written word need to be considered within the wider subject context by exploring the role of elements such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing together. By the same token, certain key elements cannot be revealed through a written-text based or a written-text focused approach. By studying texts, or elements or modalities, solely for how they inform text production, AL are in danger of losing what Kelly (1963, p. 80) calls “permeability”, that is the “particular kind of plasticity [...] the capacity to embrace new elements”.

#### 2.4.3. English for Academic Purposes

EAP developed as an approach designed to help students by considering English as a linguistically analysable and deliverable objectivised entity. The EAP focus is a linguistic one of genre, corpora or systemic functional linguistics, i.e. the thinking and ‘academic purpose’ of EAP’s ‘English’ is for EAP rather than particular subject disciplines. For EAP courses, academic argument is considered generically and linguistically (Bacha, 2010; Wingate, 2012b). Critical analysis is contrasted with description as though the two are composite entities (Woodward-Kron, 2002), or critique is considered

regarding only how students in an EAP context can be helped with critiquing language and generic content rather than in a subject discipline context (Kiely, 2004). Although aspects of subject such as culture (Xu et al., 2016), and social practices (e.g. Wingate, 2011a) are considered what is seldom examined is how language is understood in the specific subject context.

What is considered as 'content' in the EAP literature is very specific to the subject of EAP rather than to specific disciplines. For example, Garner and Borg (2005) define 'content' as a textbook about a generic issue (which they call *Global Issues*) and argue this should be the focus of an EAP course rather than the standard aspects, such as genre, corpora and so on. Therefore, examples of EAP-focused materials may include texts with titles such as 'The making of modern Japan' for a summary writing task (McCormack and Slaght, 2005, p. 60), or 'The application of renewable energy technology in remote areas' for conclusion writing practice. Indeed, often EAP materials draw on newspapers to provide writing tasks, for example Pallant, (2004), or on the sizes of mountains and the lengths of rivers to help with comparing and contrasting tasks (Jordan, 1999). Methods for describing processes are taught – for example, the steps necessary for making paper (Jordan, 1999) – as it is assumed that students will need to do this in their subject classes and that similar English and academic purposes will apply. From this it might be assumed that all subjects value writing as an assessment tool equally and, furthermore, that students will have their writing assessed using EAP criteria rather than their subject-discipline criteria (Seviour, 2015). Johns (1988, p. 55) argues that the differences between the conventions and skills of subject-discipline writing are greater than the similarities, as “discipline, audience and context greatly influence the language required.”

Nonetheless, even arguments for more academic discipline writing instruction focus on writing rather than the subject itself, and they tend to consider elements such as critical thinking from a generic linguistic perspective, rather

than a subject-fronted one (e.g. Gimenez, 2008). Arguments and discussion often focus on how EAP contrasts with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Alexander et al, 2008), or on how specific the 'E' (or 'English' rather than subject) should be (e.g. Hyland and Hamp-Lyons, 2002). For example, the fact that Thai engineering students need to read in English has been used to justify a need for EAP (Ward, 2009).

In terms of skills, Hyland & Johnson (1998, p. 168) argue that there is a fallacy of "misplaced correctness", which tends to reify aspects of human behaviour. They explain this by considering someone who performs a task skilfully and how it may be possible to identify a discreet and substantive skill possessed by this performer although you may not be able to be able to isolate this skill and do it as well yourself. They compare this to a 'generalising fallacy' which implies that "because some putative skill [...] problem solving or report writing [...] can be performed in a range of similar contexts, then it is transferable to all contexts" (Hyland & Johnson, 1998, pp. 168-169). Quoting Ryle (1977), Hyland & Johnson (1998, p. 169) further observe that a "first-rate mathematician and a first-rate literary critic might share the one intellectual virtue of arguing impeccably, while their other intellectual virtues could be so disparate that neither could cope even puerilely with the problems of the other". From this it can be said that, within the EAP paradigm, it is the English of EAP that is removed, focused on and taught, whereas it could be argued that EAP should be refocused on the 'academic purpose' of the 'English' within its subject context.

#### 2.4.4. The 'English' of a Subject

Each subject arguably is its own individual 'language game' (Wittgenstein, 1953) that consists of three elements: human being, language and world setting (Finch, 1995). For each language game, the lecturer or student (human being) will use English (language) in its specific subject area (world setting) and it is the interrelation of these three elements that constitutes the paradigmatic heart of

the subject. For example, the human being could be a lecturer, the language could be the word 'empathy', and the world setting could be within the subject 'design'. Meaning can only be provided in the context of the subject itself and not outside it (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). As Fecho (2011, p. 19) writes, "to expect that just because you and I are using the same term or phrase that we have a consensus understanding of its meanings is to deny that context and experience having anything to do with our understandings". If subject disciplines are unique, and thus the English used within them is also unique to the individual subject discipline, a generic or AO approach cannot be considered as sufficient for supporting students in their learning. This specific discourse cannot be removed and reduced to linguistic features for analysis, or for the preparation of materials or glossaries to be used by students across a range of different disciplines, levels and other contexts, and nor can text be focused upon to the exclusion of other elements, such as the visual or emotion elements that are key in the subject of design, for example. Thus, disciplines are not exclusively textually mediated, and they are not immutable.

#### 2.5.4 International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

If the English within the subject-specific context is unique, this further raises the question of how students are determined to be prepared for studying at university in English. Universities in the UK assess this preparedness through the use of assessment tools such as the IELTS, which IELTS (2015) itself suggests is a recognised and reliable indicator of a student's ability to communicate in an English-speaking academic context. Others, such as Turner (2004), argue that an appropriate IELTS score demonstrates that the student has language equivalent to the English needed for study in HE in the UK. Indeed, recruitment to institutions in the UK is often based on this assumption. However, some authors suggest that the correlation between a



student's IELTS score and their academic readiness and performance is weak (Bayliss & Ingram, 2006; Hirsch, 2007).

If there exists an assumption that IELTS scores represent preparedness for study, it may be assumed that content and language are separate entities and that language is fundamental to academic achievement and can be assessed and supported as an abstract, objective entity (Voloshinov et al., 1973). Therefore, HEIs assume that the 'English' of IELTS equates to the 'English' needed for study at university, so assuming that 'English' is an abstract, objective entity that can be removed for testing and teaching. This summative approach (Jessop, 2017) to assessment used by IELTS can be seen as assessing the English of IELTS, rather than the subject-specific and contextualised English needed for success in communication in the student's subject of choice.

## 2.6. Conclusion

This chapter reviews the origins of the development of student learning support historically, institutionally and theoretically. It has outlined the provision of study skills and learning supports in HE and driven by government initiatives, illustrating the changing perspective of the nature and provision of learning support from something that was just 'picked up' by students to distinct study skills that can be taught. It also illustrates the development of a variety of approaches to the provision of learning support through generic approaches in learning centres, which assume language and discourse can be removed from subject-specific contexts and taught to students separately, as well as used to develop materials such as glossaries. Voloshinov (1973) argues that language is consciousness and that it is individually formed through dialogue, and this chapter critically reviewed this position and considered how the literature shows that words and phrases can vary over time, as well as between individuals and contexts of use.

This review of the literature helps to form a theoretical framework for the review of the publications in this thesis through the lens of the AO and IS approaches to the provision of learning support, where dialogue between lecturer and student in the context of the subject are key for developing learning support. An understanding of the AO and IS approaches aids in the understanding of the nature of English within the subject-discipline contexts. This theoretical underpinning is key in understanding how the AO approaches discussed in the initial review of literature removes words from their subject context to create lists, study skills materials, and classes. Following this approach, the words and texts are studied in isolation, whereas the IS approach argues for the words and text to be considered within the subject. The literature then shows how this impacts on how students are supported in their learning through EAP and AL approaches and how they are assessed for preparedness for study through IELTS, for example. If, as the theories of Volsohinov tend to show, language and discourse are alive and conscious, different approaches are needed for teaching and supporting student learning. The impact of the concept that language and learning must be determined by context in order to come alive supports the need for reflection on the provision of supporting student learning.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Introduction

The methodological and philosophical research process described in this chapter outlines the 'methods landscape' for the publications. These publications are then positioned within this landscape in Chapter 4, which appraises the publications. In this chapter, the ontology, epistemology and axiology of the published works are contextualised and discussed. However, it cannot be said that a single approach was taken in the research, as it evolved through a series of studies involving empirical research. Initially, a single incident (Fecho, 2011), prompted by an interaction with two assumedly diverse groups of students in my role of Academic Support Adviser (as described in Chapter 1 and in Richards & Pilcher (2014)), was to lay the foundation for a methodological journey.

Each research project demonstrated the value of focus groups and interviews for exploring and exposing complex findings, which helped to develop new insights for the author both as a researcher and an academic. It was found that data was best revealed through focus groups and interviews, as they provided an environment for dialogue. After the first research project, lecturers were the participants because their interpretation and analysis was initially considered more important than the author's own analysis from text alone, for example. Initially the research adopted a linguistic perspective, examining words and phrases and how these were understood and used by different groups of people, such as Chinese, direct-entrant, and home students. The results exposed the researcher to the deeper implications of language and learning, influenced by diverse stakeholders and elements beyond the limitations of words and text. This first research project uncovered the importance of subject-specific context and led to a focus on a research paradigm where data was gathered using qualitative and interpretive

methods, aiming to gain insights into how a person in a given context makes sense of a given phenomenon (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

Indeed, the research philosophy was necessarily a dynamic process of re-evaluation rather than a fixed position adhered to throughout. This can be best understood from the perspective of a constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), which assumes a relativist ontology (that there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (that the knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic setting (taking place within the natural world) of methodological procedures. However, this judgement comes from the perspective of reviewing research that has been already published, bringing an appreciation of the extent to which the research lens has developed over time. The following sections provide a critical reflection on the research methodology that was applied in undertaking the published studies, and a contextualisation of those methods with regards to the research philosophy.

### 3.2. Research Paradigm

The assumed set of beliefs underlying interpretivist research is a qualitative paradigm that informs ontological positions, epistemology and axiology. According to Bryman (2008), qualitative paradigms offer the researcher the opportunity to develop an idiographic understanding of participants living with a particular condition or in a particular situation and what it means for them within their social reality. While the original research project may have been grounded within the constructivist paradigm, it developed beyond this and took elements from alternative enquiry paradigms. Elements can be seen to have come from the paradigms of critical theory (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). Kincheloe et al. (2011) argue that there are many critical theories, that critical tradition is always changing and that critical theory tries to avoid too much specificity. This drives their argument that to “lay out a set of fixed characteristics of the position is contrary to the desire of such

theorists to avoid the production of blueprints of socio-political and epistemological beliefs” (Kincheloe et al. 2011, p. 163). Indeed, according to Denzin & Lincoln (2001, p. 244), “while qualitative researchers may design procedures beforehand, designs always have built-in flexibility to account for new and unexpected empirical material and growing sophistication.” This may also be influenced by the role (axiology) that the researcher’s values play in the research process. Heron (1996) argues that researchers should be able to articulate their values as a basis for making judgements about the research they are conducting and how they go about doing it. A conception of research as value-laden, with the researcher being necessarily involved in that which is being researched, is in close alignment with the body of work discussed here.

### 3.2.1. Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of existence and what can be known (Benton & Craib, 2011). Through the studies, the ontological position changed from a linguistic and AO stance to one that focused on the importance of subject context rather than primarily text-based ‘language’ or discourse. The IS approach became the answer to the question of epistemology, that is to say the way in which knowledge is acquired. This IS lens led to seeing ‘English’ and ‘skills’ as elements that should be studied embedded within their subject context in order for students to be supported effectively. From this, it was concluded that the diversity and complexity of ‘subject’ meant that textual study was not sufficient. Instead, in-depth interviews and focus groups enabled the construction of negotiated meanings within an IS context. The value of interviews reflects Kuntz & Presnall’s (2012, p. 735) “understanding of the interview as a wholly engaged encounter, a means for making accessible the multiple intersections of material contexts that collude in productive formations of meaning”.

To illustrate this change, the first project, investigating task words, revealed that data was collected best by conducting interviews and focus groups, as

this provided a suitable environment for dialogue in a context closer to the world setting of the subject (cf. Bakhtin, 1981). Textual analysis reveals linguistic features, such as the frequency of use of words or phrases, but other elements, such as the role of 'the visual' and 'empathy', could not have been uncovered through textual analysis alone. The research focus was not only on text production, but it included exploration of the wider context of other factors influencing student success. In one paper, for example, rather than focusing on a specific linguistic goal, the target of 'English' was more on the overall productive and receptive abilities required by students to succeed in a specific subject context.

The interpretivist approach assumes an epistemological stance whereby, through careful and explicit interpretative methodology, it becomes possible to access "an individual's cognitive inner world" (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 4). Rather than using the role of language to describe the individual's experience, interpretative methodology explores how the individual gives meaning to their experiences in interaction with their environment. Biggerstaff & Thompson (2008, p. 11) describe the cyclical process of this interpretation as: "[participants'] first encounter with text (interview/focus group process and subsequent transcription process); preliminary themes identified; grouping themes as clusters; and tabulating themes in a summary table".

The ontological and methodological approach often involved exploring language from a non-text-based, and deliberately 'simplistic', perspective that involved considering what was needed for success in a subject. For one project, the approach was simplistic in that there were very few questions and lecturers were not asked to provide specific texts, so they were only allowed to speak. The rationale for this was to stimulate dialogue around the subject-based understandings and the 'English' needed to succeed. Thus, the

methodological approach was qualitative, interpretative and dialogic in that language was explored through dialogue and context.

### 3.2.2. Epistemology

For the research presented in this thesis there is a subjectivist, interpretive epistemology (that the knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic setting (taking place within the natural world) of methodological procedures. In terms of epistemology, it is argued through the research that one cannot see much of value by only looking at a text. Equally, you cannot remove the text from the body of its subject (or its paradigmatic heart) and teach it to students with the expectation that this can then be understood and applied generally to all academic texts. The interpretivist approach assumes an epistemological stance whereby, through careful and explicit interpretative methodology, it becomes possible to access “an individual’s cognitive inner world” (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 4). Rather than using the role of language to describe the individual’s experience, interpretative methodology explores how the individual gives meaning to their experiences in interaction with their environment. According to Yanow (2000, p. 5), “interpretive methods are based on the presupposition that we live in a social world characterized by the possibilities of multiple interpretations [...] living requires sensemaking, and sensemaking entails interpretation”.

This thesis emerges from ongoing research and research findings that have been continually applied to practice through “reflections on action” (Mackenzie & Ling, 2009, p. 45) in the years following the initial investigation into the use of assessment task words (Richards & Pilcher, 2014). In terms of epistemology, it is argued here that one cannot see much of value by only looking at a text. Equally, you cannot remove a text from the body of its subject (or its paradigmatic heart) and teach it to students with the

expectation that this can then be understood and applied generally to all academic texts. As identified in one of the later publications (Pilcher & Richards, 2016), there is a level underneath the text consisting of subject lexis and discourse, and underneath this is a still deeper (existential) level consisting of elements that show the paradigmatic hearts of subjects. As Vygotsky (1962, p. 120) notes, “the meaning of a word represents such a close amalgam of thought and language that it is hard to tell whether it is a phenomenon of speech or a phenomenon of thought”. Analogously, in psychoanalysis, there are “large aspects of our psychological functioning which, though having a profound determining effect upon us, are largely hidden, that is, they are unconscious” (Institute of Psychoanalysis, 2015). The paradigmatic hearts of the subjects identified in the research were: ‘visual’, ‘philosophical’ and ‘persuasive’ for design; ‘emotional’ and ‘empathetic’, yet also ‘technical’ for nursing; ‘income-generating’, ‘numerical’ and ‘persuasive’ for business; and ‘visual’, ‘numerical’ or ‘code-based’ for computing. These psychological and ideological elements, and how they underpin subjects, are central to the arguments made in the selected articles and also in this thesis.

Throughout the research process, a number of other terms, including discourse, language, assessment terms, English, and study skills, were also discovered to be not fixed or immutable. This suggested that there is a multitudinous group of possible strains of a ‘language’ or terms and that there is still an ideal to aim for, to teach, and to learn.

If this argument can be made, it can then be further concluded that these possible ‘strains’ themselves cannot be isolated because they do not exist, and assumption of their existence constitutes a category error in the sense “in which a property is ascribed to a thing that could not possibly have that property” (Restivo, 2013, p. 175). They cannot be removed from the context of the subject discipline and be taught abstractively (Voloshinov, 1973).



### 3.2.3. Axiology

The studies comprising this thesis are primarily situated in the research domain of AL and language. Similarly to Lillis & Scott (2007, p. 6), the researcher considers himself to be writing from this geo-historical context. This can be seen most obviously in the fact that the researcher is a UK-based teacher-researcher writing from a position within HE, which is the educational domain that has been the predominant focus of AL research to date. Furthermore, this is typical of many in this field internationally in that, alongside interests and experience in the study of language (particularly, applied linguistics, ELT-EAP, education, sociolinguistics and linguistic ethnography), the complexities involved in academic communication are explored. As an author, researcher, and lecturer, the researcher's role comprises that of an academic adviser within the schools of Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries. The researcher's academic career began within the field of language and linguistics and moved into student learning, and so subjectivities were initially biased towards the linguistic perspective of helping students interpret and engage with assessments, rather than the perspective of subject-specific content. The initial meeting with students described in Chapter 1 represents a turning point in thinking about how to best help students, as a move away from previously held subjectivities to one focused upon promoting dialogues of discovery.

### 3.2.4. Research Methods

A total of four research projects (leading to the creation of four data sets) were used to inform the publications included in this thesis (e.g. Richards and Pilcher, 2014; Pilcher and Richards, 2016; Richards and Pilcher, 2016). The methods and approach used to gather data was qualitative and interpretive, as the interpretivist approach is based on naturalistic approaches to data collection, such as interviews and focus groups (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008 p. 4). Conducting interviews and facilitating focus groups reflects the value placed on personal interactions, rather than on the 'anonymity' of data

collected remotely, e.g. via questionnaires. The theme of all the data collection interactions was the 'English' required by students to succeed in their subjects, and the thinking underpinning this 'English'. Meanings usually emerge towards the end of the research process (for example, Yanow, 2014; Kubanyiova & Feryok 2015; and Hulstijn, et al 2014), yet the over-arching motivation for these projects was to better understand how to improve the support provided to students.

The first project focused on both students and lecturers and helped to identify a number of key issues about how students and lecturers may interpret the same task words differently. It was found that lecturers could not agree on how terms were interpreted in their subject-discipline context, which led to further projects focusing on lecturers rather than students. All interviews and focus groups were ethically approved (Christians, 2011) and (for the first project) those conducted in Chinese were transcribed and translated by a professional interpreter. Transcriptions were shown to individual interviewees for them to judge whether it was a true representation of what was said. For mixed focus groups where English was the main language used, Chinese participants were encouraged to discuss concepts in Chinese as much as was necessary for them. For the majority of the projects, interviews and interviews were transcribed by the researcher as the first stage of the analysis (cf. Bird, 2005). For the interviews, structured questions were rejected to avoid any 'shaping' of responses; instead a number of discussion topics / open questions were prepared. For the project investigating 'English', for example, a simple schematic was given out which had the word 'English' in the centre surrounded by 'reading', 'writing', 'speaking' and 'listening'. Lecturers were asked to consider each of the elements shown on the schematic in the context of their subject discipline.

For the fourth project, an object in the form of a brightly-coloured teapot was used as a *'probe'* or *'portal'* artefact to access participant responses. This was

presented to the lecturers in an interview and they were asked to describe and discuss it in the context of their subject discipline. The reasons for using a teapot were twofold: firstly, this was a response to a failure in previous projects to access the language required by students through the use of methods and approaches using text; secondly, this approach had been previously used in a design analytical writing class as an object to create context, stimulate dialogue and prompt analysis. The teapot was removed from its box in the class and, without any prompting, the students and the lecturers stood up, passed the teapot to one another and immediately began to describe and evaluate it. This led to the idea of using objects as portals to create context in interviews rather than text.

Where interviews were used, they were reflexive and active to allow for discussion (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Focus groups contained a maximum of twelve participants and a minimum of three (Shamdasani & Stewart, 1990; Barbour, 2007). All interviews and focus groups were recorded digitally. With regard to the analysis of interview and focus group transcriptions, this was conducted using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2011), whereby transcripts were continually read and reread by the authors to allow for the diffraction of ideas (Mazzei, 2014) and the emergence of key themes. Where interviews were followed by focus groups, this process allowed for themes to be identified and presented for discussion in the focus groups.

The research for the first project explored the different perceptions of lecturers and students regarding assessment terms, such as 'discuss' and 'analyse' (Richards and Pilcher, 2014), while the research for the second project explored the 'English' that lecturers felt students needed to succeed in their subjects (Pilcher and Richards, 2016, Richards and Pilcher, 2016). Research project three returned to the data from the previous two projects for further diffractive reading and reflective analysis, as well as further secondary research into the nature of 'English' in the context of subject

disciplines. Research project four examined how lecturers would describe and critically evaluate a physical object (in this case a teapot) in their subject areas.

All stages of this process, including managing over 50 hours of recorded data, were handled by the author. Other research projects often make use of research assistants to conduct interviews and facilitate focus groups, while recordings are sent to third parties for transcription. While it may have been tempting, given the hours needed to transcribe, review and analyse data, to use additional staff to assist with the data collection and analysis, the process of actively going over and checking recorded interviews and focus groups contributed to a closeness to the data that enabled a change in the epistemological lens which, in turn, led to a change in ontological view. The emergent ontological and epistemological positions adopted by the researcher placed value on direct participation in the data collection.

The details of research participants and the data collected for each project and related papers are summarised in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Publications and Projects**

| Publication   | Data collection method/Project  | Number of participants   | Participant groups  |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Richards, K. &amp; Pilcher, N. (2014). 'Contextualizing higher education assessment task words with an 'anti-glossary' approach', in <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i>, 2, 1-22</p> <p>Richards, K., &amp; Pilcher, N. (2013). 'Discuss, analyse, define... non-traditional students come to terms with cultures of learning, in the UK'. <i>Researching Intercultural Learning: Investigations in Language and Education</i>, 135-151.</p> | Project 1: Cascading focus groups x 7 (on average, 90 mins duration)  | <p>Total in groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4 x 5 =20</li> <li>2. 2 x 7 =14<br/>all repeats from previous</li> <li>3. 1 x 12 = 12<br/>all repeats from previous</li> </ol> | Lecturers from a Chinese-speaking background, lecturers from an English-speaking background, students from a Chinese-speaking background and students from English-speaking backgrounds. Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries Schools |
| Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2015). 'Avoiding dialogues of non-discovery through promoting dialogues of discovery', in <i>Dialogic Pedagogy Journal</i> , 3, 43-64.   | Re-reading of above data through Bakhtinian dialogical lens   | As above   | As above  |
| Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2016). 'An individual subjectivist critique of the use of corpus linguistics to inform pedagogical materials', in <i>Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal</i> , 4, 122-141.  | Project 2: 21 interviews (30 minutes duration, on average) and twelve focus groups (90 minutes duration, on average). This includes data from previous study focus groups included in project one | <p>21 participants in interviews</p> <p>5 focus groups with all interview participants- 4 in 4 groups and 5 in 1 group.</p> <p>Focus group data from the previous study</p>                      | <p>As above.</p> <p>Interviews and focus groups with lecturers from Business, nursing, design and Computing</p>   |
| Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2015). Deconstructing 'Mono'-lingualism: Considerations of Value for 'English' 'Language'  | Project 3: 21 interviews (30 minutes duration, on average) and five focus groups (90  | As above-21 in total for interviews and the same number again for  | As above  |

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Education in a Global Setting.' In Wong, L. T., &amp; In Dubey-Jhaveri, A. (2015). <i>English language education in a global world: Practices, issues and challenges</i>.</p> <p>Pilcher, N., &amp; Richards, K. (2016). 'The paradigmatic hearts of subjects which their 'English' flows through', in <i>Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)</i> 35, 5, 997-1010</p> <p>Pilcher, N., &amp; Richards, K. (2017). Challenging the power invested in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Why determining 'English' preparedness needs to be undertaken within the subject context. <i>Power and Education</i>, 9(1), 3-17.</p> | <p>minutes duration, on average)</p>   | <p>focus group participants</p>                              |   |
| <p>Richards, K., &amp; Pilcher, N. (2017). Academic literacies: the word is not enough. <i>Teaching in Higher Education</i>, 1-16.</p>  | <p>Previous data included from Projects 1, 2 &amp; 3</p> <p>Project 4:</p> <p>Interviews (30 minutes, on average). Use of physical object as stimulus for dialogue</p> | <p>Previous project data. New interviews of 22 lecturers</p> | <p>Lecturers from Schools of nursing, Psychology, engineering, and design</p> |

As shown in Table 2, eight publications were produced on the basis of four research projects, and these projects are considered in further detail below.

### Project 1

In this project, cascading focus groups were conducted where the first four focus groups were tasked with discussing their understanding of common assessment task words including: 'discuss', 'trace', 'analyse', 'outline' and 'describe'. The list of words studied was adapted from one presented in Cottrell (2008). These first four groups consisted of Chinese students, home students, Chinese lecturers and home lecturers. The recordings from each group were transcribed (and then translated in the case of Chinese-speaking groups), and then the results from each group were summarised and presented to the next set of focus groups for response. The second set of groups consisted of one group of Chinese students and Chinese lecturers responding to the data from all of the previous focus groups, and a second group of home students and home lecturers responding to the data from all of the previous focus groups. The final group followed the same process of transcription, translation and one final meeting of all participants to discuss the outcome of previous groups.

### Project 2

For this research, 21 subject lecturers were interviewed (for an average of 30 minutes each) from the subject areas of nursing, design, computing, and business. These subjects were chosen because they were considered to represent a broad range of disciplines and because the researcher was providing academic support to students studying in these areas. The interviews focused on what lecturers considered to be important 'English' within their subject discipline, and these were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then read and reread in order to explore the emerging themes around subject-specific terms and language, which were then presented to focus groups with at least one lecturer from each discipline. The transcripts were then further analysed

using the corpus linguistics approach commonly used in EAP to identify key academic terms in subjects for students to learn in sets.

### Project 3

This was an extension of the two previous research projects that involved re-visiting previous data, with a particular focus on the results from Project 2. In this case, the focus was the 'English' used in subject-specific disciplines in order to compare similar words and phrases used in different contexts.

### Project 4

The data from the first three projects was again used for this research, but this time a further 22 interviews were conducted with lecturers from the same four subject disciplines examined in project two, with a view to re-visiting and enriching findings from previous research. For the interviews, a teapot was kept in a box while we explained that we wanted lecturers to look at an object and describe and evaluate it from their own subject perspective, and then they were shown the object. The interviews (on average, 20 minutes in length) were transcribed as the first step of the analysis. The approach to analysis consisted of a more classic type of objectivist grounded theory (Glaser, 2009) combined with a more constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2011). This is because for two of the subject areas (nursing and design) previous studies had already provided an insight into the underpinning elements of the description and critique likely to emerge (e.g. Pilcher and Richards, 2016). However, what was not known, because of the limitation of text-based methods, was precisely what thoughts and language would be conveyed in these areas.

## 3.7 Conclusion

The 'methods landscape' outlined in this chapter has been set out through considering the ontology, epistemology and axiology of the publications included in this thesis. The approaches evolved through four individual research projects using a qualitative and interpretive research approach, where focus groups were valued for exploring and exposing findings. These findings were subjected to a



process of evaluation and re-evaluation that is best understood from within a constructivist paradigm that assumes a relativist ontology, subjectivist epistemology and a naturalist setting of methodological procedures. Chapter Four considers each publication in terms of the 'point of departure', 'theoretical context' and 'contribution'.

## 4. Publications

### 4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to critically evaluate a selection of the author's publications from the last ten years in order to support and inform the author's submission for the award of PhD by publication. There are eight publications presented from within the ten-year time frame and one publication from 2006, which is not included for critical review but as a starting point to demonstrate the theoretical and conceptual development undertaken. All of the publications went through a double-blind refereeing process apart from the book chapters (publications 3 and 5), which were peer reviewed by the editors of the text. Most of the publications were reviewed by at least two reviewers, with publication 2 being considered by three reviewers and publications 4 and 6 by four reviewers. This chapter begins with an acknowledgement of collaborative publication and a statement of the author's contribution. The selection of publications represents an evolution in the author's thinking and approach to supporting student learning from a conceptual base, initially developed and represented in the first publication, to the development and application of IS (as opposed to AO) approaches to continuing research and professional practice. A self-critical summary for each publication, in terms of strengths and weaknesses, is presented in Table 3, which provides a conceptual framework to frame analysis and discussion including the research approach, theoretical start points and contribution to theory and understanding in the field. The conclusion to this chapter gives a synthesis of the contribution the body of work has made to the field of student learning support.

The publications considered here were co-authored with Dr Nick Pilcher and, in one case, with Helen Godfrey. In the co-authored publications where I am the first-author, I was the principal researcher responsible for the original concept and initial contextualisation of the concept explored. When

authorship is shared, both authors determined the structure of the paper and wrote the paper collaboratively. Dr Nick Pilcher is willing to be contacted to address any queries over co-authorship. He has written and signed a letter related to this, a copy of which is presented in Appendix 7.2. Research is a creative dialogic process and without collaboration a work may become a monologue with little new discovery and interaction, or a dialogue of non-discovery. From this perspective, it is difficult to engage in a dialogic process without an 'other'. According to Lewis, Ross & Holden (2012, p. 705), "collaboration enhances research productivity". The process underpinning the presented articles began with a concept that the author presented to Dr Nick Pilcher as a research proposal. Since then, there has been a system of 'turn-taking' in our research and writing process where one of us leads on a concept and the approach to research and writing, with the name of the originator coming first in the published papers.

Table 3: Publications, including research approach, theoretical start point and contribution

| Timing  | Publication  | Research approach  | Theoretical start point   | Contribution to theory/understanding   |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| 2006 (out with the time frame for publications to be considered for PhD by publication but included as a starting point). | From Dunedin to Dunedin: Supporting students in the changing world of higher education.  | Secondary sources and desk research to examine the development of learning support for students in HE.   | Historical perspective of provision of 'study skills' from osmosis approach to embedded approach.               | Literature search included articles relating to study skills provision. Changing perspective (institutional HE and government) of the nature and provision of skills.                                      |
| 2014 (Technically the first publication, but the peer review process and publication process took                         | Contextualizing higher education assessment task words with an 'anti-glossary' approach. | Qualitative and interpretive-cascading focus groups and reflective analysis. Focus groups comprising of Chinese students, non-traditional home students, Chinese | Meeting with international students (Chinese) and direct entrant students concerning the use of assessment task | Language is not fixed in time and place. The meanings of words and phrases can vary greatly over time, between individuals and contexts of use. Glossaries of terms are fixed in time and place and do not |

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| longer than for the following chapter). |   | background lecturers and home lecturers. Diffractive.   | words led to questioning of the general applicability of the language being used and how it may differ greatly in different contexts. Glossaries and study skills materials do not show this.  | help students greatly. Led to a greater insight to the provision of support for student learning and the nature of 'study skills'.  |
| 2013                                    | Discuss, analyse, define... non-traditional students come to terms with cultures of learning in the UK. | Used the findings from the above study to consider the research approach from the perspective of non-traditional (international, in this case) students and cultures of learning. | The theory is that home students and international students will be able to use glossaries and study skills, but the researcher questioned whether these words were fixed, whether the students would encounter different words and that the words might change over time.<br><br>Highlights the different routes students might take to university in the UK depending on whether they are traditional or non-traditional students. | Begins to develop the need for dialogue between lecturers and students to ensure that understanding of what is required of students is mutually understood and agreed upon. Considers dialogue from a Bakhtinian perspective.                       |
| 2015                                    | Avoiding dialogues of non-discovery through promoting dialogues of discovery.                           | Diffractive re-reading of findings from the above research through a Bakhtin/Voloshinov lens.   | Continued theoretical development from above.<br><br>Exploration of the concept of dialogue in terms of supporting student learning  | This was developed from a paper presented at Bakhtin conference (see 4.4). The paper was well received and led to many significant meetings, including with Junefelt who advised on the inclusion of Voloshinov and the AO and IS trends; and Fecho |

|      |   |  |   |  |
|------|---|--|---|--|
|      |   |  | and negotiating meaning. Considers the possibility these may be dialogues of non-discovery where the lecturer(s) and student(s) may assume the same meaning.  | who introduced the concept of 'wobble'. Led to a new research project exploring the nature of English in subject disciplines. It also led to a meeting with an academic from Australia/Korea and further research and publications.  |
| 2016 | An individual subjectivist critique of the use of corpus linguistics to inform pedagogical materials. | Qualitative, interpretive analysis of data from focus groups and interviews. Interviews with lecturers from four different subject disciplines and followed by focus groups comprising a mixture of the interviewees considering the nature of the English of their subject. Diffractive reading and re-reading. | The theory is that, if the language is fixed, it can be removed and studied. But if it is not, as the previous research demonstrates, it cannot be. Similar words can be understood in different ways depending on context. Approaches such as corpus linguistics remove words to create lists for study and material creation. There has been little critique of this approach.<br><br>Use of IS lens (Voloshinov, 1973) to consider the existing trend of removing academic language from the subject context to examine and create learning materials to support student learning. In this case corpus | Lecturers struggled to identify what English was key to their subject initially. This led to research project investigating the nature of subject context by creating a context using an object (project four).<br><br>Words removed for the creation of lists and then used in study skills materials and classes are removed from the context of the subject discipline. This leads to the studying of the English of the subject rather than the subject in English. Context is key.<br><br>Rethinking of how students are supported in their learning (EAP, AL), and how they are assessed as ready for study (IELTS). |

|   |  |  |   |   |
|---|--|--|---|---|
|   |  |  | linguistics was critiqued.  |   |
| 2015 (Book chapter. Again, the process of publication was quicker than the corpus linguistic publication) | Deconstructing monolingualism: Considerations of value for 'English' 'language' education in a global setting. | As above, plus secondary sources and desk research into the nature of monolingualism.  | If language is unique to the individual, then 'native speaker' and 'monolingual' as a reifiable entity is a category error.   | Further explores Volohinov's (1973) argument that language is consciousness and individually formed through dialogue. If genuine language is alive and conscious, different approaches are needed for teaching. Implications for the provision of support for student learning, as, if language is determined by context in order to come alive the same can be said for the provision of supporting learning.                                      |
| 2016  | The paradigmatic hearts of subjects which their 'English' flows through.                                       | Qualitative, interpretive analysis of data from focus groups and interviews. Interviews with lecturers from four different subject disciplines and followed by focus groups comprising a mixture of the interviewees considering the nature of the English of their subject. Diffractive reading and re-reading. | The starting theory developed from the above is that language would be used differently in different contexts. From this was developed the idea that key psychological and ideological elements underpin language. This is seen in terms of subject-specific contexts.<br><br>Each subject has a unique, paradigmatic heart that might be 'visual', 'empathetic' or 'numerical' (for example). Through these hearts flows the English of the subject. | Further explores the context of subject through Voloshinov and Bakhtin and Vygotsky's (1962) linking of language and thought. If English is removed from the subject to be studied or to produce learning materials, then the English is being studied rather than the subject. Difficulty in getting lecturers to identify key words, phrases and 'English' of their subject led to a further research approach using an object to create context. |
| 2017  | Academic literacies: The   | Further interpretive, diffractive analysis of above data sets and new data gained  | Following on from previous theory development   | The publication is mostly supportive of the approach but raises questions concerning  |

|      |  |   |  |  |
|------|--|---|--|--|
|      | word is not enough.  | through interviews of subject lecturers.  | <p>here text (essay/report writing) is considered as an insufficient focus within subject disciplines, yet text creation in the AO approach is continually highlighted as the most important skill that students need.</p> <p>This publication further identifies the uniqueness of subjects and how other elements are key.</p> | context and the focus on text production. It is suggested that student learning should be developed more holistically.   |
| 2017 | Challenging power invested in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Why determining 'English' preparedness needs to be undertaken within the subject context. | <p>Interpretive, diffractive analysis based on interviews of lecturers. Interviewees were invited to explore how their subjects were described and evaluated through the use of an object (colourful teapot) as a portal to create context. Lecturers discussed how the object would be evaluated and described by students in their subject.</p> <p>Further desk-based, and secondary research was also conducted. Many IELTS preparation and practice books were reviewed, as were official IELTS sample questions.</p> | <p>Now the theoretical standpoint is the idea that each subject has its own IS lens, and this is the same for IELTS.</p> <p>This publication critiques assessment of international student's preparedness for study in university.</p>   | <p>The teapot created an almost immediate portal to the context of subject. Not only the importance of context of subject for supporting student learning was further considered, but also how important it was to engage the lecturers in that context to create meaningful dialogue. This enabled the critique of another approach to support student learning.</p> <p>This publication argues that tests such as IELTS remove language from the subject context and, furthermore, test the English of IELTS rather than the English of the subject.</p> |





#### 4.1. From Dunedin to Dunedin: Supporting Students in the Changing World of Higher Education

Godfrey, H., & Richards, K. (2006). 'From Dunedin to Dunedin: Supporting students in the changing world of higher education'. In G. Grigg & C. Bond (eds.), *Supporting learning in the 21st century: Refereed proceedings of the 2005 Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa New Zealand Conference*. Auckland: ATLAANZ, 18-31.

##### 4.1.1 Background and Research Approach

This publication was the result of a paper originally presented at the ATLAANZ (Association of Teaching, Learning and Language Advisers New Zealand) conference in New Zealand, which was attended by over 200 university and further education providers. Secondary sources concerning study skills support were used as was desk research, which allowed the author to explore influences from governmental and institutional positions. Both authors worked in the field of provision of learning support in a Scottish university based in different faculties. This author was responsible for the initial literature search, the critical review of this literature and the preparation of the conference presentation from the perspective of the faculty, while the other author did the same from her faculty perspective. Both then worked together on the assimilation of this information and created an institutional perspective for the conference presentation and subsequent publication.

##### 4.1.2. Theoretical Start Point

The widening access agenda in HE in Scotland was the background to this publication in terms of a discussion concerning the development of learning skills provision in universities. This publication considers this from the historical perspective of the provision of study skills in universities ranging from the osmosis approach to the embedded approach. This paper is indicative of the 'study skills' approaches to supporting student learning and success within universities (Percy & Skillen, 2001; Trotter & Cove, 2005). In Scotland, this was a response to the Cubie Report (1999) which promoted access to HE and an

increasing number of students entering universities from non-traditional, under-represented and disadvantaged groups (Court, 2004; Johnston, Knox, & MacLeod, 2005; McNicol, 2004). The publication discusses the traditional 'osmosis' approach to learning support where students are expected to gain skills by being exposed to them (Chapple & Tolley, 1998), and how authors argue that new study skills needed to be explicitly taught as not all students enter university equipped with these skills (Johnston, 2003; Skillen et al., 1998). A second approach was a remedial or generic model to supporting student learning through study skills provision (see Skillen et al., 1998, p. 3), with generic classes provided by a 'learning centre'. This approach typically included opportunities for one-to-one appointments between students and learning advisers, access to generic learning support materials, and students potentially referred by lecturers. The model suggests a need/demand for remedial support and conceptualises the students as lacking ability or being in some way 'deficit'. The publication discusses the embedded or integrated approach to supporting student learning and success that was in place at the author's institution at the time. It suggests a move from the generic and remedial study skills approaches to supporting student learning towards a combination of pre-sessional, introductory sessions and specific study skills sessions focusing on specific coursework.

#### 4.1.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding

The publication contributes to the field of supporting student learning by identifying the potentially deficit model of generic teaching of skills and suggesting a move away from the generic, central model of support to an embedded one. However, this, in hindsight, is also generic as the model suggested still focuses on skills removed from the context of the subject discipline. There was still an assumption that language, discourse and skills could be removed from very specific contexts to create handouts, materials and study skills classes.

On reflection, little actual analysis was undertaken on how effective these approaches were for students and little or no analysis was conducted into what the actual subject-discipline lecturers might need their students to know and do in terms of specific skills. Indeed, it could be argued that this publication was more of a description of existing practices that did not add much new to the field. That said, the publication was also a good reflection of what was happening in the field and it started to question the generic nature of skills provision. The conference organisers invited the authors to develop the work as an article for inclusion in the refereed proceedings journal. Further to this, several connections were made with other participants; one of these resulted in a collaboration with a fellow academic from the University of New South Wales, with whom a comparative study was conducted investigating Australian and Scottish student support practices and impact. This second study was then presented at the First-Year Experience in Continuing Education Conference (Richards, Godfrey, & Hunter 2006).

Following the positive response to the presentation, and the resulting collaboration, further institutional dissemination of the benefits of an embedded approach at Faculty level became possible, with the Dean inviting the author to present the work at Head of Department meetings and the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. This, in turn, led to an uptake in requests from Programme Leaders within the Faculty to provide embedded support for specific programmes where there were a significant number of direct entrant and further education students.

## 4.2. Contextualising Higher Education Assessment Task Words with an 'Anti-glossary' Approach

Richards, K. & Pilcher, N. (2014). 'Contextualizing higher education assessment task words with an 'anti-glossary' approach', in *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 2, 1-22.

### 4.2.1. Background and Research Approach

A chance encounter with a group of Chinese students seeking advice on the wording used in an assessment led to a dialogue on the meaning of task words and how these might differ between assessments and subjects. This resulted in a discussion about the study skill guides and glossaries the students had been given, which they felt did not specifically tell them about the use of task words in their subject. On the same day, a group of direct entrant students from the same course came to an appointment and a similar discussion took place. These interactions seeded doubt on my part. If two quite disparate groups shared the same interpretation (rather, misinterpretation) of key assessment terms, and could not arrive at a clear understanding of these terms through glossaries and study skills materials, then what did that mean? For the Chinese students, the author initially questioned whether it was an outcome of linguistic misunderstanding. There was also a question of what other factors, in terms of their academic experience, might have impacted on both groups. To explore this, a qualitative, interpretive approach was used in the form of a series of cascading focus groups. This was an original idea from the author and the 'cascading' in this context referring to the focus groups moving between individual groups of a) home students, b) Chinese students, c) English-speaking background lecturers and, d) Chinese-speaking background lecturers. Chinese groups were provided with a Chinese-speaking facilitator and the focus groups were conducted in Chinese. Each group was recorded, transcribed by the authors and a Chinese translator (in the case of the Chinese groups), and then analysed. Results were collated and presented for discussion to the next groups where all students were

cascaded into one group and all lecturers into another. The final cascaded group contained all the participants together.

The author initiated the project after the encounter with the two groups of students described above and following an initial literature search into the area of task words. The second author was invited to participate as both had worked together professionally and shared similar perspectives on student support and language. This was the start of a fruitful collaboration where we take turns in being lead author, according to turn-taking or whoever raises an original idea to explore further, with all work divided equally. The process of transcribing (lasting on average 90 minutes for each) was time consuming and, at times, frustrating (especially as I am dyslexic), but leaving it to someone else may have resulted in a less meaningful engagement with the data. This has been our continued approach for subsequent research projects.

The student research participants reported that when they sought to discover the meaning of specific task words they would be referred to dictionaries, study skills books and handouts in the form of glossaries of terms. They did not find this particularly useful. From a review of multiple university support sites and study skills resources, it was found that the definitions for the common assessment task words were congruent, whereas when lecturers were asked to define the task words the interpretations provided significantly varied. This led to the consideration of the different elements that impact on meaning, and the development of the notion that meaning can be actively negotiated in a dialogical process depending on context.

#### 4.2.2. Theoretical Start Point

Some authors, including Dundas, Maclennan, & Musselbrook, (2000), have focused on the transition to university and how students from different backgrounds may struggle with the specific discourse and language of university (McNicol, 2004). Some highlight the need to explicitly teach or scaffold task words and terms. Bakhtin (1981, p. 293) suggests that all words have the "taste"

of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived, its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones are inevitable in the word.

This publication is not unique in raising concerns about students' interpretation of common task words and other academic terms, and a number of 'solutions' to these issues have been suggested in the literature. Williams (2005, p. 168) notes that in order to overcome these differences, lecturers in other subjects had "developed handouts that explain what common assessment verbs mean". Nevertheless, these handouts are also glossaries; for example: "Discuss: present reasoned arguments for and against the proposition (consider, explore, cf. Evaluate)" (Miller et al., 1998, p. 107). Miller et al. (1998, p. 105) correctly note that "naturally many of the words have different meanings when used in other contexts", but they do not identify the specific ways in which different meanings can arise. The publication highlights that language is not fixed in time and place and that the meanings of words can vary greatly over time between individuals and contexts of use. Glossaries of terms are fixed in time and place and do not help students greatly.

#### 4.2.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding

The strength of this work is the impact it had on the authors, research participants, the journal editor and the wider academic community. For the authors, the process led to a rethink of the provision of learning support in their own professional practice, learning approaches, and the tools and assessments that inform these approaches. It also introduced the work of Bakhtin, which was to prove key to future research. This research process and the writing of the publication led to a greater insight into the provision of support for student learning and the nature of study skills. The publication posits that a process of dialogism can be used between lecturer and student to negotiate a clearer meaning and understanding of key terms. Guidance is offered in the form of

suggested questions to stimulate dialogue. These practical examples show how essential it is that such a process occurs within the discipline-specific context.

This research can be seen as pivotal to the direction of this thesis. The approach to supporting students' understanding of assessment task words and skills through the provision of glossaries and handouts was questioned and a step was made towards an approach in alignment with an IS perspective for the development of support for student success. Yet, at the same time, this approach was still primarily linguistic and text-based, as words and phrases were removed from their context for analysis. The publication included a set of suggested questions for lecturers to adapt to their subject discipline which, from the position of developed theoretical hindsight, might be seen to be removed from context. It did, however, recognise the changeability and fluidity of the meaning of words and the importance of context, which is a theme that continued to be explored and developed in subsequent research and publications.

The editor of the *Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* (QSE), in which the article was published, suggested that the findings had an impact on his approach to teaching and learning and how he supported his students through the 'anti-glossary' approach. This publication led to an invitation to present the research at the Internationalisation of Pedagogy and Curriculum in Higher Education: Exploring New Frontiers conference (HEA/UKCISA *Teaching International Students (TIS) project conference in partnership with the Centre for Academic Practice and Research in Internationalisation (CAPRI)*, and the *Centre for Internationalised Curriculum and Networking (CICIN)*, University of Warwick, 16-17 June 2011) and, subsequently, to an invitation to write an article for the Higher Education Academy. This is, in turn, led to many requests for papers from researchers and colleagues in other institutions in the UK and abroad. At the request of colleagues in other institutions, the findings from this research were used to facilitate a variety of academic and professional development sessions in

several places including: Greenwich University, National Taiwan University, Edinburgh University, Stirling University, St Andrews University, Glasgow Caledonian University and Herriot Watt University (see appendix 7.3).

Funding grants from the Scottish Government Widening Access Fund to develop digital materials to support non-traditional entrants to HE was awarded on the basis of this publication. This fund was also used to employ and supervise a student intern for the project and with this student's help three videos were created, which were used in the presentations and workshops given at other universities.

As of 25/10/17 there have been 212 downloads of this article from the journal home page.



### 4.3. Discuss, Analyse, Define... Non-Traditional Students Come to Terms with Cultures of Learning in the UK

Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2013). 'Discuss, analyse, define... non-traditional students come to terms with cultures of learning, in the UK'. *Researching Intercultural Learning: Investigations in Language and Education*, 135-151.

#### 4.3.1. Background and Research Approach

This publication can be seen as a result of the impact of the previous publication discussed. In the process of transcribing and translating the Chinese recordings from the focus groups, the professional translator became engaged in the subject matter as she is an academic with a research and publishing background in the field of language and cultures of learning. The authors met with the translator to discuss the publication and were invited to contribute a chapter to a book. The findings from the research project were revisited and the author conducted a further literature and desk search into the area of cultural differences in learning. The publication first discusses the approaches to study skills, as outlined in the literature review above, and then it introduces the concept of dialogue as a means to support learning experiences for both home and international direct-entrance students. As the theme of the book is intercultural learning, the editors were particularly interested in the perspectives on learning of the Chinese students interviewed rather than the non-traditional direct-entry students.

In this paper, the metaphor of different journeys is used to illustrate the routes students may take before university. For the traditional students (route 1) the students were seen as taking a bus straight to university from school that stops at year one. For the non-traditional students (route 2) their journey takes them to other places (work, tertiary college) before it arrives at university and stops either at year one, two, three or four. It is also possible for these students to be the first in their family (first generation) to go to university. For the international students (route 3), students arrive by plane rather than bus, and are flown into an unfamiliar environment to start in either year one, two, three or four.

Direct entrants are students who enter the later years of a degree programme without having completed earlier ones; possibly, they articulate into the second, third or fourth university year from a tertiary college or go directly into a later year because their prior learning is recognised. Students could also be transferred from universities in other countries, as many UK universities now have joint international degree programmes in which the first two or three years of study are, for example, in a university in China or India, with the remaining year or two completed in Britain for a British degree or sometimes a joint UK qualification with the university in their home country. However, there are other types of 'non-traditional' students in the UK: 'mature' students entering university aged over 25, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, or first-generation undergraduates who are the first in their family to study at university.

#### 4.3.2 Theoretical Start Point

The various interpretations of assessment task words uncovered in the previous publication were revisited to investigate cultures of learning (traditional vs. non-traditional) for direct entrants and the assumptions that may be made by teaching staff in respect to these cultures. The previous publication and this one continues to develop the theory that home students and international students may not be able to use glossaries and study skills materials as the students will encounter different words that develop and change over time. Following the 'dialogicality' approach, students and lecturers engage in dialogue. This approach acknowledges a 'deficit' in student knowledge, which needs to be reduced through dialogue. This approach is arguably the most effective for non-traditional students, as it helps counter connotations of elitism associated with learning (Freire, cited in Clark, 2002). Establishing a context for such dialogue and identifying areas for its focus reveals much about current cultures of learning in the United Kingdom and about how to engage students and teachers in constructive dialogue.

#### 4.3.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding

This and the previous publication contribute the proposal that there is a need for more dialogue between students and lecturers to ensure that understandings of what is required are mutual. It also had, along with the previous publication, a direct impact on the author's work in supporting student learning and success, including students from diverse backgrounds. The author used, and continues to develop, the dialogic approach when discussing learning issues with students and colleagues.

#### 4.4. Avoiding Dialogues of Non-Discovery Through Promoting Dialogues of Discovery

Richards, K, & Pilcher, N (2015) 'Avoiding dialogues of non-discovery through promoting dialogues of discovery' *Dialogic Pedagogy Journal*.

##### 4.4.1. Background and Research Approach

This publication is derived from a paper presented (by the author of this thesis and co-author in absentia) at a conference: The Fourth International Interdisciplinary Conference on Perspectives and Limits of Dialogism in Mikhail Bakhtin "*Dialogue at the Boundaries*", University of Waikatao, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014. This publication signifies a theoretical and conceptual change in research and analysis with the introduction of Voloshinov's (1973) conceptualisation of AO and IS approaches to language, which the author adapted as a lens for consideration of student learning approaches. This was a direct result of the author's attendance and presentation at the conference mentioned above. The paper prepared by the authors was well received and led to meetings and discussions with influential Bakhtinian and Voloshinovian academics and researchers from around the world.

The research for the conference presentation involved re-visiting and reinterpreting the data used in the previous publication (project/data set one), which continued the diffractive continual reading and re-reading of data (Mazzei, 2014). Further secondary and desk research conducted equally by both authors considered the Bakhtinian (1981) theory of dialogue with a focus on the concepts of dialogues of discovery and dialogues of non-discovery (Buber (1947) and Bohm (1996)). This was made possible by what Wright Mills (1959, p. 232) describes as an ability to "shift from one perspective to another" that the authors experienced as a direct result of this author's attendance at the conference. The diffractive re-reading of the research data from project one, the consideration of further secondary sources (Buber (1947) and Bohm (1996), for example), and the discussions with conference attendees all led to the consequent journal publication.

#### 4.4.2. Theoretical Start Point

Dialogues of discovery could be categorised into the following areas: educational and literacy-based, socio-economic, linguistic, and philosophical. The author's dialogues of discovery consist of two dialogues. Firstly, a dialogue involving the data collection that explored the research questions in the initial project, and secondly, an ongoing discursive and reflective dialogue within the academic community exploring their reactions to the results. A review of the original event of meeting the Chinese students and direct entrants to discuss coursework led to a consideration of the dialogic process (Bakhtin, 1982). The dialogue with these students represented a turning point in the approaches taken to help students and shows how the author as a practitioner moved forward from previous subjectivities to help promote 'dialogues of discovery' as opposed to 'dialogues of non-discovery', where dialogue takes place but nothing new or useful is discovered by the participants. At the level of the utterance and the word, the language used in such dialogues is similar to what Bakhtin (1986, p. 88) would call "neutral", in the sense of belonging to "nobody". Although the word may give the impression of being "another's word" or "my word" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 88), it is nevertheless removed from its "actual context" (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 35) of the subject discipline and the task actually set by the lecturer.

In a 'dialogue of discovery', the words and utterances are relevant to the addresser and addressee and both are actively listening and engaging in dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986). Thus, the words and utterances are genuine (Buber, 1947) and lead to the questioning of previously held assumptions, which is essential for dialogue (Bohm, 1996). This dialogue revealed the existence of multiple linguistic and cultural understandings of assessment terms that could only be understood through dialogue that was genuine and technical (Buber, 1947), and where previous assumptions had to be suspended (Bohm, 1996). Therefore, the dialogue came to be one of discovery, as the words were 'owned' more by both the students and the adviser, rather than being neutral (cf. Bakhtin, 1986).

A significant point to be taken from this publication is that it is often wrongly assumed that students will know, and should know, what is expected of them from assessment terms. Further, the worst approach to helping students who ask about such terms is to direct them to a glossary or a dictionary. In the case of the original dialogue with Chinese and direct entrant students, the dialogue those students had with their lecturers was one of non-discovery and monologic utterances (Buber, 1947). The dialogue could not be genuine or technical as assumptions were made of the students' knowledge and understanding (Bohm, 1996). Directing students to resources such as glossaries and study skills handouts is decontextualised monologue using neutralised words (Bakhtin, 1981). While initially assumed effective by both student and lecturer, as both can believe that something has been said or read to help, this decontextualised help is a part of a series of monologic utterances rather than genuine or technical dialogue (Buber, 1947).

#### 4.4.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding

This publication was developed from the presentation given at the Bakhtin conference. The presentation was well attended, and the attendees included a number of key academics and researchers in the field of Bakhtin and Voloshinov pedagogic research, including Karin Junefelt and Robert Fecho. Junefelt and Fecho approached the author after the presentation and the resultant dialogues at the conference (continued through email exchanges) led to suggestions to consider Voloshinov's work. This led to reading of the AO and IS approaches to language and learning that were used in the publication and led to a continuation in the author's own shift towards an increased focus on the place of dialogues of discovery with students and colleagues to negotiate meaning of task words and other subject-specific terminologies and approaches. This re-assessment of existing approaches to supporting student learning and success also resulted in the development of a series of workshops with academic colleagues in a number of universities – for example, see Appendix 7.3. A direct consequence of this re-assessment of approaches

resulted in a new research project (Project Two) exploring the nature of English in subject-specific contexts.

An exchange of ideas and emails with a Korean academic led to an agreement to produce a chapter in a book targeted at Korean academics new to teaching in EMI. It also led to the initiation of a collaborative research project. This author believes that the final publication and impetus for further research and collaboration was made possible through the opportunity for dialogues of discovery presented by attendance at the conference. Prior to this, the limitation of the previous research was that it was still primarily linguistic and text-based, as words and phrases were removed from their context for analysis. This publication went beyond this and enabled the author to view the provision of student learning and support from the AO and IS perspective. Although the primary focus and direction of the research moved towards subject-specific contexts in terms of student learning support, there were also invitations to contribute chapters to books such as the following publication.

#### 4.5. Deconstructing 'Mono'-Lingualism: Considerations of Value for 'English' 'Language' Education in a Global Setting

Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2015). Deconstructing 'Mono'-lingualism: Considerations of Value for 'English' 'Language' Education in a Global Setting.' In Wong, L. T., & In Dubey-Jhaveri, A. (2015). *English language education in a global world: Practices, issues and challenges*.

##### 4.5.1. Background and Research Approach

This publication, in the form of a book chapter, is the result of an invitation from the book's editors Wong and Dubey-Jhaveri to contribute to a collection of chapters considering the theme of English language in the modern world. On one hand, this represented an invitation to return to both researchers' linguistic roots, while, on the other hand, it provided a forum to bring newly-developing concepts and ideas to language study, such as the abovementioned concept that language is not fixed and depends largely on context. The aim of this chapter was to propose a move to the concept that language is unique to the individual and, therefore, new approaches to teaching are needed as monolingualism may be a category error in the sense that it is a concept 'in which a property is ascribed to a thing that could not possibly have that property' (Restivo, 2013, p. 175) and may not exist.

The data from the previous research were revisited and reread diffractively. Furthermore, both authors engaged with further reading of secondary sources and desk research considering the nature of monolingualism. As part of the research process, the authors reviewed a number of currently used English language textbooks. The publication posits that a literacy-based approach should be considered for teaching, alongside existing textbooks, grammars and lexis, with this approach being underpinned by a theoretical and philosophical grounding that shows genuine language is alive and conscious, aiming towards language used in different contexts. It is anticipated that rejection of the concept of monolingualism will liberate teachers, students and developers from the pressure of seeking to reach the unattainable pinnacle of an English



monolingual ideal. The work argues that to teach, participate in, and develop classes that focus on language as consciousness makes the process and experience of learning the language come to life, because that is how language is used.

#### 4.5.2. Theoretical Start Point

If language is unique to the individual (Volshonov, 1973) then 'native speaker' and 'monolingual' as reifiable entities is a category error. The authors argue that this is the case given the huge variety in English, but, more importantly, in the sense that the reason for such variety is that language constitutes individual consciousness. It is argued that language is consciousness (Voloshinov, 1973), and thus it is individual and formed through dialogue (Bakhtin, 2010), which cannot be fixed and written down in an ideal 'form' to be taught and learned (*contra*. Chomsky 1972; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Saussure, 1959).

#### 4.5.3 Contribution to Theory and Understanding

This publication further explores Voloshinov's argument that language is consciousness and individually formed through dialogue. In this publication it is argued that genuine language use is only present when the language used by individuals is connected to, and constitutive of, consciousness. This argument is extended to English language teaching and it is suggested that a literacy-based context for English language teaching, learning, and materials development provides this. The authors argue such a literacy-based context provides the motivation for, and reason for, learners to use the English language, as it is identical to how they use *any* language. If it is alive and conscious, different approaches are needed for teaching. There are implications for the provision of support for student learning as if language is determined by context in order to come alive the same can be said for the provision of supporting student learning. The findings contributed to further consideration of what English actually is in terms of subject-specific context. If English differs and changes in different

contexts, this has potential implications for the teaching of EAP, how it is assessed, and the value of the tools commonly used to compile materials for supporting student learning and success. This led the authors to consider English in the subject, EAP, corpus linguistics and IELTS in further publications.

#### 4.6. An Individual Subjectivist Critique of the use of Corpus Linguistics to Inform Pedagogical Materials

Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2016). An individual subjectivist critique of the use of corpus linguistics to inform pedagogical materials. *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal*, 4.

##### 4.6.1. Background and Research Approach

The process of preparing and writing the publication appraised in section 4.5 and the previous publications contributed to an ongoing paradigmatic shift in the author's understanding of how student learning and success is best supported, as well as how to best approach the design and development of supporting materials. The introduction of Voloshinov's concepts of AO and IS approaches to learning resulted in a return to the original research data for diffractive reading and the conducting of a new research project to investigate the nature of English in subject-discipline contexts. Thus, a series of interviews and focus groups were arranged with participant lecturers from four different subject disciplines.

Qualitative, interpretive analysis was then done of the data from the interviews and focus groups. The authors conducted further secondary source and desk research into the nature of 'English' and 'subject' and then each author conducted the same number of interviews, transcribed these interviews and together analysed the interview data to create a visual representation of the findings. This representation took the form of an iceberg as the tip, with another deeper level illustrating the English that all lecturers and others could see, and with the deeper elements representing the paradigmatic hearts of subjects beneath the water. The target was not a specific linguistic goal concerning the nature of English, but rather to identify what holistic productive and receptive abilities students in different subject-specific contexts required for that subject.

The initial interviews used a simple tool in the form of a sheet of paper with the word 'English' in the middle surrounded by 'Reading', 'Writing', 'Speaking' and 'Listening'. Lecturers were asked to consider this and talk about each category in terms of what their students would need in order to succeed. Focus groups were

then conducted by both authors with mixed discipline groups of interviewees considering the nature of the English of their subject. Following this, each author transcribed the focus group recordings and together conducted further diffractive reading and re-reading of the data. The results were first used to critically reflect on corpus linguistics, which is commonly used to identify key academic words and phrases to be used to compile lists for teaching EAP and ESP. The authors felt that this could only be done guided by the fundamental AO belief that language is comprised of a closed linguistic system with the only linguistic connections between the words and the text. This publication reconsiders of the value of using such tools that remove words and phrases from the subject-specific context.

#### 4.6.2. Theoretical Start Point

The theory is that, if language is fixed, it can be removed, studied and turned into lists. But, if it is not fixed, as the previous research demonstrates, it cannot. Similar words can be understood in different ways according to context. Approaches such as corpus linguistics remove words to create lists and for materials creation and there has been little critique of this approach. As Vygotsky (1962, p. 120) notes, “the meaning of a word represents such a close amalgam of thought and language that it is hard to tell whether it is a phenomenon of speech or a phenomenon of thought”. Through an IS lens, it is suggested that removing language from its original subject-specific context for analysis limits the impact of materials created for supporting student learning. The gathering together of a large body of texts to be fed into a computer and analysed for ‘frequency’ (McEnery & Hardie, 2012) aligns with an AO view that the language is stable and immutable, and that it is constructed from a system within a given, closed linguistic system. Only by being grounded in such a view would corpus linguistics be able to assume that what it was counting was indeed countable (Richards and Pilcher, 2016). It can be argued that these terms and words should not be removed for analysis but instead studied within their context where meaning can be negotiated.

#### 4.6.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding

There was little critique of corpus linguistics until this publication. The publication further argues that words removed for the creation of lists and then used in study skills materials and classes are removed from the context of the subject discipline. When this is done, it can be argued that the English of the subject is being removed for study, rather than studying the English within the subject. The complexity and critical importance of context is further highlighted in this publication, which contributed to the professional practice of the authors and led to further rethinking about how students are supported in their learning through approaches such as EAP and AL, as well as how they are assessed as ready for study (e.g. IELTS). A limitation encountered in the research process was that the lecturers in interviews and focus groups (to some extent) could not, initially, identify what English was key for their subjects. This may have been because they know their subject but are not usually expected to know what English is key to the subject they teach. This led to a different approach in research project four, where an object (a colourful teapot) was successfully used as a physical portal to create a context for dialogue.

The findings were also used to present a conference paper at IATEFL ESP-SIG in Athens (2017) with the intention of creating genuine dialogue around the issue of the importance of using contextualised language in relation to corpus linguistics. A limitation from this is that perhaps the message was not clear enough, or readily accepted in the language and linguistic community, with one question from the audience asking why this was being researched given how widely the corpus linguistics approach was used and how, at that particular conference, there were several presentations given based on data gathered using corpus linguistics. Furthermore, the notion of lack of context was contested, as corpus linguistics uses co-text to create context. However, when 'co-text' was investigated further through secondary sources, instead of finding elements similar to what had been presented (key psychological and ideological elements underpinning the text, as discussed in the publication), it was found

that 'co-text' referred to accompanying text or words surrounding a word that are meant to provide meaning (Stubbs, 2001). These words are still removed from the subject-specific context. The authors were unable to attend the conference in person, so the organisers invited us to present through a real-time video link . This raised another limitation for the author, as it was felt that the author as presenter was still physically outside of the context of the conference and could not adequately engage in dialogue with attendees.

The paper has been read 95 times (ResearchGate as of 25/10/17) and has been cited thrice.

#### 4.7. The Paradigmatic Hearts of Subjects Which Their 'English' Flows Through

Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2016) 'The Paradigmatic hearts of subjects which their 'English' flows through' *Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)*

##### 4.7.1. Background and Research Approach

The importance of subject-specific context demonstrated the potentially different interpretations of how words, phrases and discourses might be interpreted in different contexts. The research (project three) used for informing this publication set out to explore what constitutes the specific English of a subject and found that each subject had a paradigmatic heart through which a unique English flowed. Research project three consisted of qualitative, interpretive analysis of data from focus groups and interviews. This began with interviews with lecturers from four different subject areas and then in focus groups made up of a mixture of different subject-discipline lecturers discussing the nature of English for their subjects. This is described in 4.6.1. Other studies considering the 'English' for subjects, such as corpus and genre studies, typically rely on data gathering from bodies of spoken or written text removed from the context of the subject (Gardner & Nesi, 2013; Lea & Street, 1998; Hyland, 2013), while the research for this publication used interviews and focus groups, so uncovering the equal importance of other elements of 'English' in the paradigmatic heart of specific subjects.

Following the interviews, where it was initially thought that the lecturers might struggle with identifying what English was key to their subject, it was decided when conducting the diffractive reading and re-reading of the transcripts that a visual representation of the findings would be beneficial for focus groups. A graphic representation of an iceberg was decided on as it was found that the English initially identified by the lecturers could be seen in all subject disciplines. Beneath this was a meso layer of language and discourse, which might be found under the surface through more traditional approaches, including corpus linguistics. The final, hidden layer was of greatest significance as it can be

considered the true paradigmatic heart that can only be seen and defined by the subject-specific context.

#### 4.7.2. Theoretical Start Point

The starting theory developed from the previous publication is that language would be used differently in different contexts. From this the idea was developed that key psychological and ideological elements underpin language. For this publication, 'paradigmatic heart' was defined as the set of values, beliefs and perceptions that represent the central or innermost engine of a subject. Each subject has a unique, paradigmatic heart that might be 'visual', 'empathetic', or 'numerical', for example; through these hearts flows the English of the subject. By implication, the 'English' of the subject will live or function differently if removed from its paradigmatic heart for, as Vygotsky (1962, p. 120) notes, "the meaning of a word represents such a close amalgam of thought and language that it is hard to tell whether it is a phenomenon of speech or a phenomenon of thought".

The findings in the literature review suggest that, if subject disciplines are unique (as argued in this publication), then the English in them should also be seen to be unique to that subject context. The English, or paradigmatic heart, cannot, therefore, be removed to reduce to language features for analysis, nor can it be easily used to create study skills materials as the English of the subject-specific disciplines are not immutable.

#### 4.7.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding

This process of researching and writing this publication can be seen as pivotal for the author as it enabled him to engage with the support of students and lecturer colleagues in greater depth within the subject-specific context and to move beyond the linguistic-based analysis of words and texts removed from the subject-specific context. This publication further explores the context of subject through Volshinov (1973), Bakhtin (1981, 1986) and Vygotsky's (1962) linking of



language and thought. Similar to previous publications, it was found that if English is removed from the context of the subject to be studied or to produce learning materials then it is the English itself that is being studied rather than the subject itself in the context of the English in that subject. Once the existence of unique, paradigmatic hearts of subjects were discovered, the author began to reconsider other elements and approaches to supporting student learning. One example of this is the realisation that approaches such as AL tend to focus primarily on text and text production, whereas the research for this publication exposed the paradigmatic hearts of subjects that suggest that text and text production are not as important as previously suggested. This led to the following publication which considers this.

As a result of this publication, the author was asked by the Higher Education Research Development Society Australia (HERDSA) to review and feedback on three abstracts contributed to the Annual Conference 2017 that are proposals for papers to be presented.

As identified in 4.6.3, a limitation in the research approach was that it was difficult to get subject-specific lecturers to identify the key elements of their subjects' English. This, and the process of researching and writing this publication, had a direct impact on both authors' approach to supporting student learning and their subsequent research approach.

As of 25/10/17 there this paper has been downloaded 129 times from the journal website and cited thrice.

## 4.8. Academic Literacies: The Word is not Enough

Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2017). Academic literacies: The word is not enough. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 1-16.

### 4.8.1. Background and Research Approach

The data used for this publication comes from further interpretive, diffractive analysis of the previous two research project data and a focus on the research from research project three, as discussed in 4.6.1. The authors conducted further, secondary source reading into the AL approach, and desk-based research was also conducted. The focus of the research was on lecturers and this is discussed in 3.1. Previous project findings and secondary source reading suggested that approaches to supporting student learning, such as EAP and AL, focus almost exclusively on text production and a table compiled by the author of fifteen research articles concerning EAP and AL highlights this focus (Pilcher & Richards, 2017 p. 3). However, the research conducted for this publication suggests that writing and text production are just one element key to student success and these varied greatly depending on subject-specific contexts.

### 4.8.2. Theoretical Start Point

As discussed in 4.7, it was found that there were key non-textual elements within each of the subject areas analysed and, in some cases, the non-textual elements such as 'empathy', 'the visual' and 'non-verbal' were features not revealed through text. Rather than prioritising text, AL approaches can help develop student learning and success more effectively by holistically considering other non-textual, elements. The publication is broadly supportive of the AL approach, but questions are raised concerning context and the focus on text production, suggesting that support for student learning needs to be developed more holistically within subject-specific contexts.

The literature review identified that authors such as Coleman, (2016) argue that AL do recognise the importance of no-text elements, but that these elements are not given much attention in comparison to the focus on written text. It is noted

that AL recognise activities outside of text but, as Lillis and Scott (2007, p. 11) suggest, these activities are used to show how this works in the creation of texts. Furthermore, although it has been acknowledged that AL do “not focus merely on assessed writing” (Lea, 2004, p. 739), this publication suggests that the main concern is most often on activities and materials that are intended to help improve writing skills (e.g. Coleman, 2016). Thus, studying texts and embedding AL in subject disciplines helps students to succeed. Indeed, AL have made a significant contribution to helping students produce written text.

For example, for the subjects of nursing and design, once student success is studied holistically, a number of elements are revealed that can strengthen and enhance AL approaches. They clearly confirm that written texts are important, and that AL has done indispensable work to help students with written text production. It is argued that they also show that by exploring student success holistically, rather than focusing on written texts or the production of written texts alone, key elements are revealed that underpin and inform written text production. Awareness of these elements also contextualises the role of written texts within that of other elements in overall student success.

#### 4.8.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding

This paper was of particular relevance to the author as the learning support he provides is conducted within the Schools of Computing, Engineering and Creative Industries, all of which have programmes of study that use non-text-based assessments and learning approaches frequently. The publication’s focus on AL can also be shifted to other approaches to learning support, such as study skills, EAP and ESP. Within these paradigms, a significant amount of resources, materials and teaching are focused on text generation almost exclusively. Furthermore, this text generation can be seen to be part of an approach that is partially of the AO trend, without the focus being on subject-specific learning and assessment, or a more IS trend.

As identified in 4.6.3, a limitation in the research approach was that it was difficult to have subject-specific lecturers identify the key elements of their subject's English. This, and the process of researching and writing this publication, had a direct impact on both authors' approaches to supporting student learning and their subsequent research. In the case of working with design lecturers to develop their students' ability to critique and evaluate design objects, the author of this thesis took a physical object in the form of a brightly-coloured teapot to the lecture and tutorials. This is discussed in the final publication critique.

#### 4.9. Challenging Power Invested in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Why Determining 'English' Preparedness Needs to Be Undertaken Within the Subject Context

Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2017). Challenging the power invested in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Why determining 'English' preparedness needs to be undertaken within the subject context. *Power and Education*, 9(1), 3-17.

##### 4.9.1. Background and Research Approach

In the article (Pilcher & Richards, 2017 p. 4), it is noted that a website that is linked through the British Council states:

IELTS is the world's most popular English language test for higher education and global migration. IELTS is accepted by over 9,000 organisations worldwide including universities, employers, immigration authorities and professional bodies. Over 2.2 million IELTS tests were taken globally last year.

(Future Learn, 2015)

This highlights the widespread use of the IELTS test, not only for level of English ability and preparedness to study in university but also its increasing use to assess the language ability and suitability of native English speakers applying to emigrate to countries such as Australia and Canada (Kenny, 2015).

The research for and writing of this publication is, again, pivotal as the limitation of the previous research (difficulty in creating dialogue around the subject-specific context of English) led to the approach used here. This research (data set 4) used to inform this publication is interpretive and it uses further diffractive analysis from the previous research projects. Secondary research in the form of research articles on the subject of IELTS and other tests, and examination of official IELTS test guides and textbooks designed to assist students in preparing for the test, are also used. The research process involved presenting a teapot as a physical portal to establish context and dialogue, as described in 3.2.4, and also in 4.6.4 and table 3. This was an original idea proposed by the author that had

been previously successfully used in teaching and learning support practice. Interviewees (lecturers) had the teapot presented to them and were asked how their students might evaluate and describe this object in their subject discipline.

#### 4.9.2. Theoretical Start Point

If, as the previous publications suggest, English within the subject-specific context is unique, then this further raises the question of how students are determined to be prepared for studying at university. This is seen in the use of tests commonly used by universities in the UK, such as IELTS, to test student preparedness for study at university. As indicated in the literature review, authors such as Turner (2004) argue that an appropriate IELTS score demonstrates that the student has English equivalent to the English needed for study in a UK HEI and recruitment to institutions in the UK is often based on this assumption. If there exists an assumption that IELTS scores represent preparedness, it may be assumed that content and language are separate entities, and that the English is fundamental to academic achievement and can be assessed and supported as an abstract, objective entity (Voloshinov et al., 1973). Therefore, HEIs assume that the 'English' of IELTS equates to the 'English' needed for study at a HEI. They may assume that 'English' is an abstract, objective entity that can be removed for testing and teaching. This summative approach (Jessop, 2017) to the assessment of the English used for IELTS can be argued to be assessing only the English of IELTS rather than the subject-specific and contextualised English needed for success in communication in a student's subject of choice.

This publication is a continuation in the development of the theoretical base gained from the research and publications that each subject has its own subjective context and that this is the same for IELTS. In this publication, the authors suggest that language tests, such as IELTS, remove words, phrases and so on from the context of their subject and so are testing IELTS English rather than the English of the subject the student is preparing to enter. This publication

continues the development of theory from the IS approach, with the main theoretical focus being that English is specific to the subject-specific context, there are individual and unique ideological and psychological elements of English within subjects, and that non-textual elements exist and are an integral part of subjects.

#### 4.9.3. Contribution to Theory and Understanding

This publication follows on from the findings in 4.2, which argued that language is not fixed in time and place and that the meanings of words and phrases can vary greatly over time, between individuals and contexts of use. Publication 4.4 came from the diffractive re-reading of findings through a Bakhtin/Voloshinov lens, leading to a new research approach and publication in the form of the publication in 4.6. This research added to the development of the author's theoretical base that English differs in different subjects, as is shown in 4.7 which further explores the context of subject through Voloshinov and Bakhtin and Vygotsky's (1962) linking of language and thought. If English is removed from the subject to be studied or to produce learning materials, then the English is being studied rather than the subject. The publication discussed in section 4.8 continues to use the concept of paradigmatic hearts within subjects, and is mostly supportive of the approach, although it raises questions concerning context and the focus on text production. It is suggested that student learning should be developed more holistically.

It was found that there was criticism of IELTS within existing research, with some claiming a low correlation between academic performance and IELTS scores (Kerstjens & Nery, 2001); others arguing that a higher IELTS score is needed (Muller, 2015); and that an IELTS score alone is not enough and that students should also attend EAP classes and a pre-sessional language courses (Harris, 2014) – yet universities in the UK mostly assume that IELTS is representative of preparedness. It was also found that IELTS had developed its own unique vocabulary and approaches to reading, writing, listening and speaking and that a

wide variety of materials have been created for students to study in preparation for their IELTS test. The authors argue that IELTS not only removes English from the subject context but also creates its own, unique English of IELTS to be tested rather than the English of the subject. Before the interviews began, the author of this thesis had concerns about the ability of the teapot to create a portal to dialogue in the context of the subject discipline, yet this was not found to be the case for this author and it was only the cause of a moment's hesitation for one interviewee of the co-author. In all cases, the interviewees looked at the teapot, handled it, and immediately began to discuss it from a subject perspective.

As of the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2017, the article has been downloaded a total of 234 times and (according to the journal site's metrics) since April 2017 has been discussed positively in five active tweets. It has been used to support an article published in *wonkhe* (Pilcher & Richards, 2017) and forms the basis of an article under consideration for the education section of *The Guardian* newspaper.



## 4.10. Conclusion

The main aim in providing this critical reflection of the provided publications is to identify the author's unique contribution to the academic knowledge base in the field of supporting student learning and to show the intellectual development of his thinking. A significant element of this has been the development of research skills over time, which have been used through the development of the four research projects and data sets. The overview of this can be seen in Tables 2 and 3. By doing this, the author has contributed to a greater understanding in the field of supporting student learning and in developing a theoretical and conceptual lens through the consideration of the existence of AO and IS approaches to supporting student learning. It has been argued and demonstrated through this work that English is specific to the subject-specific context, there are individual and unique ideological and psychological elements of English within subjects, and that non-textual elements exist and are an integral part of subjects. It has been further argued that current approaches to supporting student learning are situated within the AO approach.

The theoretical base continues to be developed through ongoing research and writing for publication. This includes published articles (and a current book project) in the area of EMI, a publication under review concerning writing in university, and another under review further examining access to the paradigmatic hearts of subjects using a physical portal. The development of research skills can be seen in the progression from desk-based research to using interviews and focus groups and diffractive reading and re-reading in an interpretive analysis process.

The concluding chapter of this thesis summarises and synthesises the contribution of the work to the academic body of knowledge in the area of supporting student learning. There is also a consideration of possible directions of further research and reflections on the limitations of the research approach.



## **5. Conclusions and Contribution to the Field of Supporting Student Learning**

### **5.1 Introduction**

As indicated in Chapter One, the aim of this thesis is to bring together the research and findings of a series of publications to demonstrate the author's understanding and contribution to knowledge in the area of supporting student learning and to define and contextualise the contribution made in the field. This is done through the development of an illustration of how the research journey has developed (Figure 1) and the significance of Volshinov's identification of AO and IS approaches to language and learning (Table 1). To present the analysis of the publications, a conceptual framework was created shown in Table 3. The first publication (Godfrey & Richards, 2006) is used as a representation of the starting point of the author's research and conceptual development journey from a text-focused, AO approach to one that is continually developing into a more holistic and IS approach to supporting student learning. The process of doing this in the form of this thesis has not been without challenges but has been of great assistance in the development of awareness of the research process and it has helped to frame the critical analysis of the publications presented here, as well as other previous and future contributions.

### **5.2 Aims and Objectives of this Thesis**

The aim of this this thesis was to highlight and demonstrate the contribution made to understanding and knowledge in the field of supporting student learning through a critical reflection on the literature of the field through the developing of AO and IS lenses. It also identified and considered the development of learning support for students in HE in the UK through contextualised methodological approaches. This section considers the aims and objectives that were outlined in the Introduction (Chapter 1).

*(1) Critical reflection on the literature, including the over-arching paradigms of AO and IS approaches.*

The aim of this PhD by publication is to articulate the author's contribution to understanding and knowledge in the field of supporting student learning. This has enabled the author to return to previous sources and draw together a new range of debates within the literature associated with supporting student learning, culminating in an understanding of the existence of AO and IS approaches and the development of a conceptual framework for analysing student learning support approaches. Supporting student learning literature focuses on a range of dimensions, from the deficit and generic support through the provision of study skills workshops and materials (Leggett, Kinnear, Boyce & Bennett, 2004); scaffolded participation (Williams, 2005); providing an apprenticeship to university (Griffin, 2007; Yorke, 2003) and language support (Swales, 1990). The author introduces the process of dialogue, or 'dialogism' (Bakhtin, 1982; Marková & Linell, 2006), where students are supported through a process of negotiating the meaning of what is expected of them from within the context of the subject.

*(2) Evaluation of student learning support practices in the UK*

It was found that other authors focus on the institutional discourse of skills gaps (Court, 2004; Johnston, Knox, & MacLeod, 2005; McNicol, 2004); how students entering from non-traditional pathways such as college and international routes might lack familiarity with the discourse of the subject (e.g., Chapple & Tolley, 2000; Johnston, 2003; Skillen et al., 1999); and that academic lecturers might not be able to articulate what they would like students to know or do (Lillis & Scott, 2007). The literature also considers the response to the perceived skills gap in terms of universities establishing generic learning centres (Skillen et al., 1998) and embedded models, where academic skills are taught within the subject discipline (e.g. Skillen, Merten, Trivett, & Percy, 1998), as well as developing study skills materials for

students to apply to their subject context. Most of these approaches tend to focus on the creation of text in the form of academic writing. A number of student learning approaches have been developed, including EAP and AL, which, in turn, use methods such as corpus linguistics to create lists of words and phrases for teaching study skills and the creation of materials. Student preparedness for study at university is also assessed through tests such as IELTS. In the attached publications, these approaches have been critically reviewed through the lens of Voloshinov's (1973) understanding of the AO and IS approaches to language and learning and it has been argued that English is not immutable, stable and removable for analysis and teaching in a generic EAP, literacies, and study skills contexts, and that this should instead be undertaken on an individual basis in each subject. That is to say, language and learning support for student success needs to focus on how these elements are undertaken in the specific subjects the students are studying. By doing this, the author considers that a contribution has been made to an understanding of the development of and influences on approaches to student learning, and this addresses the limitations of previous and existing approaches to supporting student learning and success.

However, limitations are also recognised in this work. The initial research was limited to the focus on task words alone and how these can be used for text production, while the other research was limited by an inability to establish a link to the lecturers' understanding of the English of their subject disciplines. Having said this, these are also strengths, as subsequent projects in the research journey developed into a more holistic Bakhtinian and Voloshinovan analysis of student learning approaches that resulted in the development of the author's theoretical and conceptual framework. Another limitation is the range of subjects and the focus on one institution. This is supplemented through secondary sources, but may need further consideration. The conceptualisation of 'subject' may also be limiting as it was found the broad definition of one subject may include a diversity of individual disciplines

within which there are diverse approaches to learning and assessment. The subject discipline of engineering, for example, might include product design, materials, mechatronics, renewable energy, architecture and surveying and others. A further limitation is that the focus of the research has been on critiquing existing approaches to supporting student learning and developing an alternative theoretical base, but it does not give much consideration to the practicalities of how to implement and support innovative approaches to supporting student learning. A final limitation is that the author comes from a background of language, linguistics and pedagogy, yet is arguing for a more subject-specific, IS approach to supporting learning while working as a lecturer/academic adviser based within the School of Computing (and also covering the School of Engineering and Built Environment and the School of Creative Industries). This also can be seen as a strength in that the author, through the process of this research journey, has significantly changed his approach to supporting learning. The author actively engages in the Bakhtinian dialogic process to negotiate a mutual understanding of subject context meaning with academic colleagues and students. The introduction of the use of approaches, such as physical objects, has also acted directly as a portal to subject context.

### *(3) Assessment of the contribution to knowledge*

The author's focus is on researching and developing approaches to supporting student learning, so this body of work mostly contributes to this field. Due to the nature of the author's work in HE, this can also be seen to contribute to pedagogical development across disciplines. The author appears to be one of the few conducting research in the field through the lens of Bakhtinian dialogic and Volshinovian lens of approaches to language and learning. The field of study skills and student learning also seems to be one that focuses mostly on text and text production, while the author contributes to a broader and more holistic inclusion of other, more context-specific, elements. This has

enabled contributions in the form of evaluation of the contextual influences on student learning and support approaches, as well as tools and methods within those approaches.

The earlier work submitted for this submission explores a number of different contexts within approaches to supporting student language and learning development. The research process and the writing of these publications helped in identifying many different elements within the AO approach that impact on the support given. The process has enabled the author to contribute to the field by looking beyond the removal of words from the subject context for study and the focus on text production to the discussion of other elements, such as the visual and the psychological. The research practices have provided a lens for others in the field to apply to their institutions and practices. This can be demonstrated through the invited presentation of the author's work at conferences and staff training events in various institutions.

*(4) Contextualization and substantiation of methodological approaches deployed in the work*

In Chapter Three, the methodologies and method are discussed while table (2) outlines the approaches employed in the publications. Although the research was initially seen through a linguistic perspective of looking at words and phrases and how these were understood and used by diverse groups of people, the research approach was later driven by a pragmatic approach to interpreting meaning and exploring and exposing complex findings, which helped to develop new insights. The ontological position changed from a linguistic and AO stance to one that focused on the importance of subject context rather than primarily text-based 'language' or discourse. The IS approach became the answer to the question of epistemology, that is to say the way in which knowledge is acquired. The author's research perspective (axiology) was initially influenced by field of language and linguistics and later

moved into student learning, and so subjectivities were initially biased towards the linguistic perspective of helping students interpret and engage with assessment, rather than the perspective of subject-specific context. This has led to a broader contribution to the field of education and learning research and to specific subject contexts.

The author believes that this submission reflects maturity in the research journey with each publication demonstrating the appropriate use of sophisticated research methodologies. In developing a framework for analysing the support of student learning, the author feels that the ability to research and synthesise literatures from a range of disciplines and apply them to a particular context is demonstrated.

### 5.3 Limitations

In this section, theoretical, methodological and implementation (into practice) limitations of the thesis are addressed.

The first limitation is that the theoretical basis of the thesis is firmly located in the dialogic literature, with a strong focus on 'Russian' authors such as Vygotsky, Volshinov and Bakhtin. In the case of the latter two, works authored in the 1920s and 30s were only (relatively) recently introduced as translations to the West from the 1970s onwards, and have been influential in the fields of education philosophy increasingly since then. Vygotsky's concepts of language and thought have been influential in the fields of linguistics and pedagogy, and Bakhtin provides the dialogic approach for practical implementation of the ideas presented in this thesis, and the key element of the importance of context. Volshinov's work provides the framework of the Abstract Objectivist and Individual Subjectivist approaches central to the development of the research, publications and thesis.

The focus on the dialogic has meant that more text-based methodologies and approaches have been neglected. For example, Hoey (2001) discusses the



different types of texts that exist and also discusses text creation, but this is done through the framework of genre analysis which is considered by the author to be (in this context) an AO approach and already discussed through other authors in the publications presented. Prior (1998), considers academic activity but again through genre analysis and primarily focused on text production. Similarly, Ivanič (1998) focuses on text analysis and creation through a discourse analysis approach. The work of Lillis (1999, 2001) concerning text analysis and text production has been drawn upon in the publications, and it might be argued that that work could be further used in the thesis itself for contextualisation of the dialogic approach. It should be noted that Lillis considers the writing of students from a non-traditional background, institutional practices and potential cultural biases, themes which have been fully covered within the publications.

Wingate (2006) offers a discussion of the limitations of 'study skills' in the form of 'bolt on' and deficit models of support and the focus, again, is primarily on text and text production. Wingate (2006) praises the embedded model of support for students but the model promoted in this thesis is one of integration rather than embeddedness, where the skills are taught as part of the discipline through a dialogic process involving key stakeholders such as students and lecturers. In other publications Wingate (2012) critiques textual bias arguing that writing is the main form of assessment in HE and, therefore, there is justification in adopting this as a primary focus. In the publications presented here the research shows that writing is important, but its significance greatly varies depending on the subject-discipline as does the approach to writing itself.

In another text-based approach, Street (2006) focuses on the Autonomous and Ideological models of literacy which share a number of similarities with the Abstract Objectivist and Individual Subjectivist models for supporting student learning considered in this thesis. That approach has not been drawn upon in the author's work thus far, but will be taken into consideration in future research. Street focuses on how literacy practices are aspects of culture and power

structures and how there has been a 'pedagogization' (2006, p106) of literacy or the socially constructed link between the institutional processes (in this thesis these are glossaries, materials and study skills, for example) of learning and literacy. Multimodality and the over-emphasis on writing and speech are also considered.

These elements and approaches have been valuable in supporting the position presented in this thesis, but there are also some differences that should be noted. Psychological elements are key, but are seen from a unique, subject-discipline context as discussed in Section 2.2. The AO/IS approach is also very much focused on the individual as Section 2.2 also makes evident: the laws of language creativity are the laws of individual psychology – i.e. words are used individually, their meaning is unique to each individual and they do not represent equal items in a system. Creativity of language is meaningful creativity, analogous to creative art – i.e. language is individual and subjective, and used in a unique creative way by individuals at the time of usage.

It should also be noted that there are publications from contributors working in broadly text-based approaches that are not referred to in this thesis. Examples of these include: Hoey (2001); Ivanič (1998); Lillis (1999, 2001); Prior (1998); Wingate (2006, 2012) and Street (2006). Nevertheless, a number of these authors and specific publications were referred to, and critiqued, in the publications that the thesis is based on. It was from the critique of these publications and their approaches that the overarching message of the thesis is constituted. These articles were argued to primarily stem from a linguistic discourse and genre analysis perspective as opposed to the subject-embedded dialogue approach considered here, but do provide a rich background that can be drawn upon in future research. Thus, in terms of theoretical limitations, although a number of sources are referred to from a variety of discourses, literacy, linguistic and learning support paradigms both in the thesis itself and the associated publications, the direct citation of more in the thesis may have

made it more explicit regarding the context for the AO / IS approaches, even though they were very often cited in the papers constituting the thesis.

The second limitation is that the work has not fully explored power and culture in relation to the methodological approach adopted. In terms of power, there may have been an issue of the researcher's subjectivity and introduced biases. I was present for most of the focus groups and thus directly involved in the focus group elements of inquiry, pedagogy and politics that Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2011) describe. Students in the first research project may have been inhibited by the perceived or actual power imbalance between themselves, the researcher and the lecturers present. Although the participants appeared to focus on meanings of words and phrases in context, it cannot be guaranteed that none felt inhibited.

The student and lecturer participants also crossed a number of cultural boundaries in terms of education, language, culture and different pedagogical approaches. These differences may also have inhibited responses and participation. I feel that this has and is being addressed through the development of each subsequent research project. The latest project involved the use of a physical object within the interviews which provided a portal for lecturer participants to their subject-specific context. By using this approach, it was observed that participants appeared relaxed and confident as they were engaged in the dialogical process (Rowland, 2006) of negotiating and demonstrating meaning. This research approach is something that will be further explored and developed for future research projects.

A further possible limitation relating to methodology and data source, is the focus on lecturers over students. Students were used for the first research project but, as the aim with subsequent projects was to focus on what the students needed to do rather than their perceptions it was considered more appropriate to gather data from lecturers. The first research project illustrated the difficulty in exploring the language of subject disciplines from a linguistic

perspective, and each new project focused on ways of exploring this with lecturers. The work of Carvalho, Dong and Maton (2009) supports and augments the methodologies used in the research for the publications presented here. They consider the issue of describing disciplines in the field of design by using a sociology of knowledge approach, through interviews with designers. The interview protocol and questions they used in that research share similarities with those used in research project four.

The third limitation relates to implementation - the practical application of the principles of supporting student learning and success. A further publication outlining potential approaches to this is, at the time of writing, being finalised. These approaches are being promoted and disseminated through invited workshops at institutions across the UK and, most recently, through an invitation to lead a series of workshops for students and staff at a university in China.

The practical implications of the work are embedded in the author's post as lecturer and academic support adviser within three Schools (previously comprising one Faculty) at a UK university. The author is not an embedded study skills adviser, but integrated into the modules and programmes of study within these three Schools as a lecturer with responsibility for teaching and learning and delivering the subject curriculum. In this way, the dialogic process enables a negotiation of shared meaning with lecturers and students for a variety of learning, teaching and assessment approaches as groups and individually. This approach allows one academic to support a significant number of students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) at key points of their learning journey, and has been seen to be successful drawing on feedback from both students and academic colleagues.

Future research may draw on the work in this thesis to explore a number of other related areas of support for student learning. These could include academic writing support, the provision of study skills and the increased use of

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in a number of traditionally non-English speaking countries.

#### 5.4 Further Research Opportunities

Since undertaking the process of this submission, a number of further opportunities have been taken to extend the research and publication in the field of student learning support. There has been a chapter critiquing EAP, a further exploration of the use of corpus linguistics in a journal article, and three publications for journals currently in the review process concerning writing, the use of a physical object as a portal, and EMI. There is also an ongoing research project with a Korean academic collaborator that will be used for the production of a book. Other projects are also currently in consideration.

#### 5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the author's contribution to academic understanding of support for student learning in HE. Chapter Two portrayed the nature of existing approaches to support of student learning and the conceptual framework of AO and IS approaches to language and learning support. It also identified the factors and components of the field that influence how it is understood, researched and practised. Chapter Three considered the research method and methodologies used for the research projects. The table presented at the start of Chapter Four provided a framework for how each publication was researched, their theoretical starting points, and their contribution to theory and understanding. Chapter Four offered a critical reflection of each publication and demonstrated the contribution each has made to the field of knowledge in supporting student learning. It is argued that this learning support has been influenced by AO approaches to language and learning support while this

author has contributed to the development of theory and argues for the IS, subject-discipline context-based approach to supporting students in their learning and success. This will require a move away from the AO approach to learning support, as evidenced in centralised, generic 'study skills' approaches, and placing learning advice in the subject. Further, in terms of 'Academic English', it is suggested that practitioners should teach the English in the subject and not the subject in English by not removing the 'English' for analysis or counting, as it is argued that this only allows access to the outer shell of words and language. In terms of testing, the existing mainstream language assessment approaches can be argued to be testing the language of the test itself, rather than the language needed for success in the subject discipline. The assessment of 'readiness' should be conducted within the subject context and not in the subject of the test itself.

One further element in terms of contribution is that of the development of the author as a researcher and professional in the field of supporting student learning and success. Here the contribution has been significant, yet it is difficult to provide objective evidence to support this claim. The author has moved from what is now seen as a linguist supporting the academic language and discourse development of students to a position where the author as a professional uses a dialogic process within the subject-specific context to negotiate meaning in order to support students in their learning. As a researcher, lecturer and learning support practitioner, the author believes that student learning and success can be best supported through an IS approach within the subject-discipline context of learning and assessment and this is where the learning adviser must reside.

## 6. Appendices

### 6.1. Publications for PhD

#### **Publication 1: From Dunedin to Dunedin: Supporting students in the changing world of higher education**

Godfrey, H., & Richards, K. (2006). 'From Dunedin to Dunedin: Supporting students in the changing world of higher education'. In G. Grigg & C. Bond (eds.), *Supporting learning in the 21st century: Refereed proceedings of the 2005 Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa New Zealand Conference*. Auckland: ATLAANZ, 18-31.

#### **Publication 2: Contextualising Higher Education assessment task words with an 'anti-glossary' approach**

Richards, K. & Pilcher, N. (2014). 'Contextualizing higher education assessment task words with an 'anti-glossary' approach', in *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 2, 1-22.

#### **Publication 3: Discuss, analyse, define... non-traditional students come to terms with cultures of learning in the UK**

Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2013). 'Discuss, analyse, define... non-traditional students come to terms with cultures of learning, in the UK'. *Researching Intercultural Learning: Investigations in Language and Education*, 135-151.

#### **Publication 4: Avoiding dialogues of non-discovery through promoting dialogues of discovery**

Richards, K, & Pilcher, N (2015) 'Avoiding dialogues of non-discovery through promoting dialogues of discovery' *Dialogic Pedagogy Journal*.

#### **Publication 5: Deconstructing 'mono'-lingualism: Considerations of value for 'English' 'language' education in a global setting**

Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2015). Deconstructing 'Mono'-lingualism: Considerations of Value for 'English' 'Language' Education in a Global Setting.' In Wong, L. T., & In Dubey-Jhaveri, A. (2015). *English language education in a global world: Practices, issues and challenges*.

**Publication 6: An individual subjectivist critique of the use of corpus linguistics to inform pedagogical materials**

Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2016). An individual subjectivist critique of the use of corpus linguistics to inform pedagogical materials. *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal*, 4.

**Publication 7: The paradigmatic hearts of subjects which their 'English' flows through**

Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2016) 'The Paradigmatic hearts of subjects which their 'English' flows through' *Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)*

**Publication 8: Academic literacies: The word is not enough**

Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2017). Academic literacies: the word is not enough. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 1-16.

**Publication 9: Challenging power invested in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Why determining 'English' preparedness needs to be undertaken within the subject context**

Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2017). Challenging the power invested in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Why determining 'English' preparedness needs to be undertaken within the subject context. *Power and Education*, 9(1), 3-17.



## 6.2. Co-authorship Declaration



23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

**Proposal for PhD by Published Works- Co-authorship declaration**

**Title: Research grounded support of student learning in Higher Education: The importance of dialogue and subject embedded, contextualised language and content.**

### **Authorship**

Authorship of the publications is co-authorship with Dr Nick Pilcher. In these co-authored publications where I (Kendall Richards) am the first-author, I was the principal researcher responsible for the original concept and initial contextualisation of this concept. While authorship is shared, both authors determined the structure of the paper and wrote the entire paper collaboratively. Research, data collection and analysis were all done equally and in collaboration. Dr Nick Pilcher is willing to be contacted to address any concerns over co-authorship. He has signed this letter to demonstrate his agreement.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Richards".

Mr Kendall Richards (School of Computing, [k.richards@napier.ac.uk](mailto:k.richards@napier.ac.uk))

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Pilcher".

Dr Nick Pilcher (Business School, [N.Pilcher@napier.ac.uk](mailto:N.Pilcher@napier.ac.uk))

### 6.3. Sample list of workshops delivered by invitation

**'A scaffolding framework for dialogicality, or: reanimating assessment terms with an 'anti-glossary' approach.'** With project colleague Nick Pilcher. Workshop given at Heriot-Watt University Internationalisation symposium. (2014)

**'A scaffolding framework for dialogicality, or: reanimating assessment terms with an 'anti-glossary' approach.'** With project colleague Nick Pilcher in absentia. Workshop given at Stirling University. (2015)

**'A scaffolding framework for dialogicality, or: reanimating assessment terms with an 'anti-glossary' approach.'** With project colleague Nick Pilcher. Workshop given a number of times at Edinburgh Napier University including: Faculty Executive, LTA Board, School of Computing Conference, Teaching Fellow Conference, Research Group HEREN. (2014-2016)

**'A scaffolding framework for dialogicality, or: reanimating assessment terms with an 'anti-glossary' approach.'** With project colleague Nick Pilcher. Workshop given at Scot-ELAS meeting, Edinburgh University (2016)

**'A scaffolding framework for dialogicality, or: reanimating assessment terms with an 'anti-glossary' approach.'** With project colleague Nick Pilcher. Workshop given at Academic Staff Training day, Glasgow Caledonian University (2015)

**'A scaffolding framework for dialogicality, or: reanimating assessment terms with an 'anti-glossary' approach.'** With project colleague Nick Pilcher in absentia. Workshop given at St Andrews University (2015)

Presentations and workshops conducted by co-author at De Montfort University yearly from 2010-2016: **'Exploring and using perspectives of key academic assessment terms through a dialogue-based 'anti-glossary' approach.'**

## 7. References

- Adams, J (2016) Student-Writing Tutors: Making Sense of “Academic Literacies”. In Lillis, T., Harrington, K., Lea, M., & Mitchell, S. (Eds). *Working with academic literacies: Case studies towards transformative practice*. (pp. 65-74). The WAC Clearinghouse/Parlor Press.
- Alexander, O., Argent, S., & Spencer, J. (2008). *EAP essentials: A teacher's guide to principles and practice*. Reading, UK: Garnet.
- Andor, J. (2004). The master and his performance: An interview with Noam Chomsky. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 1(1), 93-111.
- Au, K. H. (1998). Social constructivism and the school literacy learning of students of diverse backgrounds. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 30, 297–319.
- Bacha, N. N. (2010). Teaching the academic argument in a university EFL environment. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 9(3), 229-241.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by MM Bakhtin* Austin: University of Texas Press (M. Holquist, Ed.; C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.).
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press (V.W.McGee, Ed. C. Emerson & M. Holquist. Trans.).
- Bakhtin, M. M. (2010). *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. University of Texas Press.
- Barbour, R.S. (2007). *Doing focus groups*. London: SAGE.
- Bartholomae, D. (1985). Inventing the university. In M. Rose (Ed.), *When a writer can't write: Studies in writer's block and other composing-process problems* (pp. 134–166). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Barton, D. (2001). Directions for literacy research: Analysing language and social practices in a textually mediated world. *Language and education*, 15(2-3), 92-104.
- Bayliss A and Ingram DE (2006) IELTS as a predictor of academic language performance. In: *Australian international education conference*, 10–13 October, Perth, Western Australia.

Benton, T., & Craib, I. (2010). *Philosophy of social science: The philosophical foundations of social thought*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Benzie, H. J., Pryce, A., & Smith, K. (2016). The wicked problem of embedding academic literacies: exploring rhizomatic ways of working through an adaptive leadership approach. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 1-14.

Biggerstaff, D., & Thompson, A. R. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A qualitative methodology of choice in healthcare research. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 5(3), 214-224.

Bird, C. M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2), 226-248.

Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*. London: Routledge.

Borges, J.L., Di, G.N.T., Reid, A., & Borges, J.L. (1979). *The book of sand*, translated [from the Spanish] (Norman Thomas de Giovanni, Trans) and, the gold of the tigers: selected later poems, translated [from the Spanish] (Alastair Reid & Jorge Luis Borges, Trans.). London: Allen Lane.

Boz, C (2016) Transforming Dialogic Spaces in an “Elite” Institution: Academic Literacies, the Tutorial and High-Achieving Students. In Lillis, T., Harrington, K., Lea, M., & Mitchell, S. (Eds). *Working with academic literacies: Case studies towards transformative practice*. (pp. 345-354). The WAC Clearinghouse/Parlor Press.

Bridges, D. (1993). Transferable skills: a philosophical perspective. *Studies in Higher Education*, 18(1), 43-51

Brown, B. B. (1968). *Delphi process: A methodology used for the elicitation of opinions of experts*. Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation.

Bruce, I. (2016). Constructing critical stance in University essays in English literature and sociology. *English for Specific Purposes*, 42, 13-25.

Brooks, J. G., & Brooks, M. G. (1993). *In search of understanding: The case for constructivist classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Buber, M. (1947). *Between man and man*. (R. G. Smith, Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cambridge ESOL. (2014). *Cambridge English teaching support*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/>

Campoy, M. C., Cubillo, M. C. C., Belles-Fortuno, B., & Gea-Valor, M. L. (Eds.). (2010). *Corpus-based approaches to English language teaching*. A&C Black.

Chanock, K., Horton, C., Reedman, M., & Stephenson, B. (2012). Collaborating to Embed Academic Literacies and Personal Support in First Year Discipline Subjects. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 9(3), 3.

Carvalho, L., Dong, A., & Maton, K. (2009). Legitimizing design: A sociology of knowledge account of the field. *Design Studies*, 30(5), 483-502.

Chappie, M., & Tolley, H. (2000). Embedding key skills in a traditional university. *Integrating Key Skills in Higher Education: Employability, Transferable Skills, and Learning for Life*, 67.

Charmaz, K. (2011). Grounded Theory Methods in Social Justice Research. In Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. (pp. 359-380) Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.

Cheng, W (2010) Empowering professionals in training to learn the language of their profession in Campoy, M. C., Cubillo, M. C. C., Belles-Fortuno, B., & Gea-Valor, M. L. (Eds.). *Corpus-based approaches to English language teaching*. A&C Black. Pp 67 – 78

Chomsky, N. (1972). *Language and mind*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Christians, C.G., (2011). Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. (pp. 61-80) Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.

Clark, C. (2002). Effective multicultural curriculum transformation across disciplines. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 4(3), 37-46.

Coleman, L (2016) How Drawing Is Used to Conceptualize and Communicate Design Ideas in Graphic Design: Exploring Scamping Through a Literacy Practice Lens. In Lillis, T., Harrington, K., Lea, M., & Mitchell, S. (Eds). *Working with academic literacies: Case studies towards transformative practice*. (pp.257-266). The WAC Clearinghouse/Parlor Press.

- Coley, M. (1999). The English language entry requirements of Australian universities for students of non-English speaking background. *Higher Education Research and Development* 18(1): 7–17.
- Corson, D. (1997). The learning and use of academic English words. *Language Learning*, 47, 671–671.
- Cottrell, S. (2008). *The study skills handbook. Palgrave study guides*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Court, S. (2004). Government getting closer: HE and devolution in the UK. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 58(2-3) 151-175.
- Coxhead, A. (2000). A new academic word list. *TESOL quarterly*, 34(2), 213-238.
- Cubie, A. (1999). Student Finance: Fairness for the Future-Report of the Independent Committee of Inquiry into Student Finance. *Edinburgh: Scottish Executive*.
- Cummins, J. (1986). Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56, 18–36.
- Davies, A. (1988). Operationalizing uncertainty in language testing: An argument in favour of content validity. *Language Testing* 5(1): 32–48.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1988). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Department for Education & Skills (2003). *Widening participation in higher education*. Nottingham: Department for Education & Skills (DfES).
- Duff, P.C. (2003) Problematizing academic discourse socialisation. In H. Marriot, T. Moore & R. Spence-Brown (Eds), *Learning discourse and the discourses of learning*. Melbourne: Monash University Press.
- Dundas, M., Maclennan, A., & Musselbrook, K. (2000). *Credit transfer at the FE/HE Interface: Widening opportunities*. Research report for the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. Edinburgh: SHEFC and Scottish Further Education Funding Council.

ESCR (2017) *Economic and social research council*.  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/>

Esposito, N. (2001). From meaning to meaning: The influence of translation techniques on non-English focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research, 11*, 568–579

Forum for the Advancement of Continuing Education (2003). *UK government strategy for post-compulsory education and its impact on widening participation*. F.A.C.E, 21, Spring/Summer.

Feast, V. (2002). The impact of IELTS scores on performance at university. *International Education Journal 3*(4): 70–85.

Fecho, B. (2011). *Teaching for the students: Habits of heart, mind, and practice in the engaged classroom*. Teachers College Press.

Finch, H.L. (1995). *Wittgenstein*. Rockport, MA: Element.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2005). The interview. From neutral stance to political involvement. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 695–727). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Freire, P., & Ramos, M. B. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Seabury Press.

Future Learn (2015) *Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English language tests*. Available at: [https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/understanding-ielts?utm\\_source¼FL\\_DB&utm\\_medium¼crm&utm\\_campaign¼27\\_05\\_2015\\_FL\\_newsletter](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/understanding-ielts?utm_source¼FL_DB&utm_medium¼crm&utm_campaign¼27_05_2015_FL_newsletter) (accessed 11 September 2015).

Gardner, S., & Nesi, H. (2013). A Classification of Genre Families in University Student Writing. *Applied Linguistics, 34*(1).

Garner, M., & Borg, E. (2005). An ecological perspective on content-based instruction. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 4*(2), 119-134.

Ghuri, P. N., & Grønhaug, K. (2005). *Research methods in business studies: A practical guide*. Pearson Education.

Gimenez, J. (2008). Beyond the academic essay: Discipline-specific writing in nursing and midwifery. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 7*(3), 151-164



- Glaser, B. G. (2009). *Jargonizing: Using the grounded theory vocabulary*. Sociology Press.
- Godfrey, J. H., & Richards, K. (2006) *Supporting Students in the Changing World of Higher Education.* In G. Grigg & C. Bond: (Eds).
- Goffman E (1974) *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Grossen, M., & Salazar Orvig, A. (2011). Dialogism and dialogicality in the study of the self. *Culture and Psychology*, 17, 491–509.
- Griffin, P. (2007). The comfort of competence and the uncertainty of assessment. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 33, 87–99.
- Gurdin, J. E. (1994). The Dialogic and the Semiotic: Bakhtin, Volosinov, Peirce, and Sociolinguistics. *Arizona Anthropologist*.
- Halliday, M. A., & Hasan, R. (1989). *Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Harris K (2014) Degree-level study without language competency is absurd. *Times Higher Education*, 3 July, 26–27.
- Hendry, G. D., Bromberger, N., & Armstrong, S. (2011). Constructive guidance and feedback for learning: The usefulness of exemplars, marking sheets and different types of feedback in a first year law subject. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 36(1), 1-11.
- Heron, J. (1996). *Co-operative inquiry: Research into the human condition*. Sage.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2006). *Emergent methods in social research*. Sage.
- Hicks, D. (2003) Discourse, teaching and learning. In S. Goodman, T. Lillis, J. Maybin & N. Mercer (Eds), *Language, literacy and education: A reader*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books, pp. 3–24.
- Hill K, Storch N and Lynch B (1999) A comparison of IELTS and TOEFL as predictors of academic success. In: Tulloh R (ed.) *IELTS Research Reports 2*. Canberra: IELTS Australia, pp. 53–63.

- Hillege, S. P., Catterall, J., Beale, B. L., & Stewart, L. (2014). Discipline matters: Embedding academic literacies into an undergraduate nursing program. *Nurse education in practice, 14*(6), 686-691.
- Hirsch, D. (2007). English language, academic support and academic outcomes: A discussion paper. *University of Sydney Papers in TESOL 2*(2): 193–211.
- Hitchings, H. (2006). *Dr Johnson's dictionary: The extraordinary story of the book that defined the world*. London: John Murray.
- Hoey, M. H. (2001). *Textual interaction: An introduction to written discourse analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The active interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 70*, 125–132.
- Horowitz, D. M. (1986). What professors actually require: Academic tasks for the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 20*, 445–462.
- Hultman, K., & Lenz Taguchi, H. (2010). Challenging anthropocentric analysis of visual data: A relational materialist methodological approach to educational research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 23*(5), 525-542.
- Hulstijn, J. H., Young, R. F., Ortega, L., Bigelow, M., DeKeyser, R., Ellis, N. C., & Talmy, S. (2014). Bridging the gap: Cognitive and social approaches to research in second language learning and teaching. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 36*(3), 361-421.
- Hyland, K. (2008). As can be seen: Lexical bundles and disciplinary variation. *English for specific purposes, 27*(1), 4-21.
- Hyland, K., & Hamp-Lyons, L. (2002). EAP: Issues and directions. *Journal of English for academic purposes, 1*(1), 1-12.
- Hyland, T., & Johnson, S. (1998). Of cabbages and key skills: Exploding the mythology of core transferable skills in post-school education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 22*(2), 163-172.

- Hymes, D. (1964). Introduction: Toward ethnographies of communication. *American Anthropologist*, 66(Part 2), 1–34.
- IELTS (International English Language Testing System) (2015) *About us*. Available at: [http://www.ielts.org/about\\_us.aspx](http://www.ielts.org/about_us.aspx) (accessed 11 October 2015).
- Institute of Psychoanalysis. (2015). *What is psychoanalysis?* Retrieved July 21, 2015, from [http:// www.psychoanalysis.org.uk/about\\_psa.htm](http://www.psychoanalysis.org.uk/about_psa.htm)
- Ivanič, R. (1998). *Writing and identity: The discursual construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- James, P. (2000). A blueprint for skills assessment in higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 25(4), 353-367.
- Jacobs, C. (2005). On being an insider on the outside: New spaces for integrating academic literacies. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10(4), 475-487.
- Jacobs, C. (2007). Towards a critical understanding of the teaching of discipline-specific academic literacies: Making the tacit explicit. *Journal of Education*, 41, 59-81.
- James, M. A. (2014). Learning transfer in English-for-academic-purposes contexts: A systematic review of research. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 14, 1-13.
- Jenkins, J. (2003). *World Englishes: A resource book for students*. Psychology Press.
- Jessop, T. (2017). Inspiring Transformation through TESTA's Programme Approach. In *Scaling up Assessment for Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 49-64). Springer, Singapore.
- Johns, A. M. (1988). The discourse communities dilemma: Identifying transferable skills for the academic milieu. *English for Specific Purposes*, 7(1), 55-59.
- Johnston, R. (2003). Widening participation, higher education and the risk society. *Journal of Access Policy and Practice*, 1(1), 4-15.
- Johnston, V., Knox, H., & MacLeod, L. (2005). Addressing social inclusion through advanced entry to higher education: A comparative study of credit transfer in

action. In J. P. Merisotis & S. Schwartz (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 14th European Access Network (EAN) Annual Conference, Social engineering or social inclusion? The impact of fees and admissions policies on widening participation in HE for disadvantaged and under-represented groups* (pp. 1-18). University of Westminster: EAN

Jordan, R. R. (1999). *Academic writing course: Study skills in English*. Harlow: Longman.

Kamberelis, G., & Dimitriadis, G. (2011). Focus groups. Contingent articulations of pedagogy, politics, and inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 545–561). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kelly, G. A. (1963). A theory of personality. *The Psychology of Personal Constructs*. London. W.W. Norton & Company

Kenny, C. (2015, September 28). Would you pass the English test for an Australian visa? *The Irish Times*. Retrieved 2017, from The Irish Times Newspaper: <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/generation-emigration/would-you-pass-the-english-test-for-an-australian-visa-1.2369830>

Kerstjens, K. and Nery, C. (2000). Predictive validity in the IELTS test. In: Tulloh R (ed.) *IELTS Research Reports 3*. Canberra: IELTS Australia, pp. 85–108.

Kiely, R. (2004). Learning to critique in EAP. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 3(3), 211-227.

Kiili, C., Mäkinen, M., & Coiro, J. (2013). Rethinking academic literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(3)

Kılıçaslan, H., and N. Kuloglu. 2015. "Visual Literacy During the Period of Architectural Education." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 191: 2824–2828.

Kincheloe, J. L., McLaren, P., & Steinberg, S. R. (2011). Critical pedagogy and qualitative research. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 163-177.

Kubanyiova, M., & Feryok, A. (2015). Language teacher cognition in applied linguistics research: Revisiting the territory, redrawing the boundaries, reclaiming the relevance. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99(3), 435-449.

Kuhn TS (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kuntz, A. M., & Presnall, M. M. (2012). Wandering the tactical: From interview to intraview. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18(9), 732-744.

Lafford, B. A. (2007). Second language acquisition reconceptualized? The impact of Firth and Wagner (1997). *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(s1), 735-756.

Lam, T. P., Irwin, M., & Chow, L. W. (2001). The use of focus group interviews in Asian medical education evaluative research. *Medical Education*, 35, 510–513

Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positionings. *Qualitative inquiry*, 5(1), 64-86.

Larson, J. (1996). Challenging autonomous models of literacy: Street's call to action. *Linguistics and Education*, 8(4), 439-445.

Laurillard, D. (1997). *Learning formal representations through multimedia*. In F. Marton, D. Hounsell, & N. J. Entwistle (Eds.), *The experience of learning: Implications for teaching and studying in higher education* (pp. 172–184). Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

Laurillard, D. (2012). *Teaching as a design science: Building pedagogical patterns for learning and technology*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lea, M. R. (2004). Academic literacies: A pedagogy for course design. *Studies in higher education*, 29(6), 739-756.

Lea, M. & Street, B. (1998). 'Student writing in higher education: an academic literacies approach.' *Studies in Higher Education*, 23, 157-173.

Lee, T. (2001). *Language-of-interview effects and Latino mass opinion*. John F. Kennedy School of Government Faculty Research Working Paper, Series 01-041.

Leggett, M., Kinnear, A., Boyce, M., & Bennett, I. (2004). Student and staff perceptions of the importance of generic skills in science. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 23(3), 295-312.

Lewis, J. M., Ross, S., & Holden, T. (2012). The how and why of academic collaboration: Disciplinary differences and policy implications. *Higher Education*, 64(5), 693-708.

Lillis, T. M. (1999). Whose 'common sense'? Essayist literacy and the institutional practice of mystery. In C. Jones, J. Turner & B. V. Street (Eds.), *Student writing in*

*the university: Cultural and epistemological issues* (pp. 127-147). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Lillis, T. M. (2001). *Student writing: Access, regulation, desire*. London & New York: Routledge.

Lillis, T. (2003). Student writing as academic literacies: Drawing on Bakhtin to move from critique to design. *Language and Education*, 17, 192–207.

Lillis, T., & Scott, M. (2007). Defining academic literacies research: Issues of epistemology, ideology and strategy. *Journal of applied linguistics*, 4(1), 5-32.

Lillis, T., and J. Tuck. 2016. "Academic Literacies: A Critical lens on Writing and Reading in the Academy." In *The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes*, edited by K. Hyland, and P. Shaw, 30–43. London and New York: Routledge.

Mackenzie, N., & Ling, L. (2009). The research journey: A Lonely Planet approach. *Issues in Educational Research*, 19(1), 48-60.

Markova', I., & Linell, P. (2006). *Dialogue in focus groups: Exploring socially shared knowledge*. London: Equinox.

Maté, G. (2011). *When the body says no: The cost of hidden stress*. Vintage Canada.

Matsuda, A. (2003). Incorporating world Englishes in teaching English as an international language. *Tesol Quarterly*, 37(4), 719-729.

Mazzei, L.A (2014). Beyond an Easy Sense: A Diffractive Analysis *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20, 742 – 746.

McCarthy, M., & O'Dell, F. (2008). *Academic vocabulary in use: 50 units of academic vocabulary reference and practice; self-study and classroom use*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.

McCormack, J., & Slaght, J. (2005). *English for academic study: Extended writing & research skills*. Reading, England: Garnet Education.

McEnery, T., & Hardie, A. (2012). *Corpus linguistics: Method, theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press.

- Mercer, N., & Littleton, K. (2007). *Dialogue and the development of children's thinking: A sociocultural approach*. Routledge.
- McNicol, S. (2004). Access to higher education among lower socio-economic groups: A historical perspective. *Journal of Access Policy and Practice*, 1(2), 162-170.
- Miller, A. H., Imrie, B. W., & Cox, K. (1998). *Student assessment in higher education. A handbook for assessing performance*. London: Kogan Page.
- Moje, E. B. (2008). Foregrounding the disciplines in secondary literacy teaching and learning: A call for change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(2), 96-107.
- Moore, T., & Morton, J. (2005). Dimensions of difference: A comparison of university writing and IELTS writing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 4(1), 43-66.
- Morris, P. (1994). *The Bakhtin Reader*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Morris, P. (Ed). (2009). *The Bakhtin reader: selected writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Mullan, J. (2010, August 6). *The folly of preserving English in aspic*. G2 Magazine, Guardian, p. 3.
- Nayak, J.G., A.L. Hartzler, L.C. Macleod, J. P. IZARD, B.M. Dalkin, and J. L. Gore. 2016. "Relevance of Graph Literacy in the Development of Patient-centered Communication Tools." *Patient Education and Counseling* 99 (3): 448-454.
- Nelson, J. (1990). This was an easy assignment: Examining how students interpret academic writing tasks. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 24, 362-396.
- Nelson, J. (1995). Reading classrooms as texts: Exploring student writers' interpretive practices. *College Composition and Communication*, 46, 411-429.
- Padilla, R. (1993). Using dialogical research methods in group interviews. In D. Morgan (Ed.), *Successful focus groups: Advancing the state of the art* (pp. 153-166). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Palincsar, A. S. (1998). Social constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 345-375.

- Pallant, A. (2004). *English for academic study: Writing: Course book*. Reading, England: Garnet Education.
- Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2017). Challenging the power invested in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Why determining 'English' preparedness needs to be undertaken within the subject context. *Power and Education, 9*(1), 3-17.
- Pilcher, N. & Richards, K. (2017, April 5). *Higher education: policy, people and politics*. Retrieved December 2017, from Wonkhe: <http://wonkhe.com/blogs/we-need-to-talk-about-ielts-and-the-case-for-testing-english-in-subject/>
- Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2016). The paradigmatic hearts of subjects which their 'English' flows through. *Higher Education Research & Development, 35*(5), 997-1010.
- Pilcher, N., & Richards, K. (2015). *Deconstructing 'Mono'-lingualism: Considerations of Value for 'English' 'Language' Education in a Global Setting.* In Wong. L. T., & Dubey-Jhaveri, A. (Eds).
- Skillen, J., Percy, A., Trivett, N., & James, B. (2001, July). Creating partnerships in supporting student learning: A paradigm shift in learning support. In *Learning Partnerships: 24th International HERDSA Conference* (pp. 8-11).
- Poland, B.D. (2001). Transcription Quality. In Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (Eds). *Handbook of interview research*. (pp. 629-649) Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Rastall, P. (2006). Introduction: The Chinese learner in higher education—transition and quality issues. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 19*(1), 1-4.
- Restivo, S. P. (2011). *Red, black, and objective: Science, sociology, and anarchism*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.
- Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2017). Academic literacies: the word is not enough. *Teaching in Higher Education, 1*-16.
- Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2016). An individual subjectivist critique of the use of corpus linguistics to inform pedagogical materials. *Dialogic Pedagogy, 4*.
- Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2015). Avoiding Dialogues of Non-discovery through Promoting Dialogues of Discovery. *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal, 3*.



- Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2014). Contextualising higher education assessment task words with an 'anti-glossary' approach. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 27(5), 604-625.
- Richards, K., & Pilcher, N. (2013). Discuss, analyse, define... 'non-traditional students come to terms with cultures of learning, in the UK. *Researching Intercultural Learning: Investigations in Language and Education*, 135-151.
- Rust, C., O'Donovan, B., & Price, M. (2005). A social constructivist assessment process model: How the research literature shows us this could be best practice. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 30, 231–240
- Saussure, F. (1959). *Course in general linguistics*. New York, NY: Philosophical Library. (Original work published 1916).
- Saville-Troike, M. (2003). *The ethnography of communication: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Scaife, J., & Wellington, J. (2010). Varying perspectives and practices in formative and diagnostic assessment: A case study. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 36, 137–151.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1994). *Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry*. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 118–137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Seviour, M. (2015). Assessing academic writing on a pre-sessional EAP course: Designing assessment which supports learning. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 18, 84-89.
- Shamdasani, P. N., & Stewart, D. W. (1990). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. *Applied social research methods series, Vol. 20*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Shulman, L. S. (2005). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, 134(3), 52-59.
- Shirkhani, F., Nesari, A. J., & Feilinezhad, N. (2015). Bakhtinian Dialogic Concept in Language Learning Process. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 205, 510-515.
- Skillen, J., Merten, M., Trivett, N., & Percy, A. (1998). The IDEALL approach to learning development: A model for fostering improved literacy and learning outcomes for students. In *Proceedings of the 1998 Australian Association for*

*Research in Education (AARE) Conference, Research in education: does it count?*  
Melbourne: Swinburne University. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap/ski98343.htm>.

Squires, A. (2009). Methodological challenges in cross-language qualitative research. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 46, 277–287.

Street, B. (2006). Autonomous and ideological models of literacy: Approaches from New Literacy Studies. *Media Anthropology Network*, 17, 1-15.

Sturgeon, L., and S. Ray. (2015). *Proceedings of the Third Conference on Computation, Communication, Aesthetics and X*, 100–110. Porto: Universidade do Porto.

Swales, J.M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (Vol. 1). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Thies, L. C. (2012). Increasing student participation and success: collaborating to embed academic literacies into the curriculum. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 6(1), A15-A31.

Tran, L. T. (2008). Unpacking academic requirements: International students in management and education disciplines. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 27, 245–256.

Trotter, E. and Cove, G. C. (2005) Student Retention: An Exploration of the Issues Prevalent on a Vocational Degree Programme with Mainly Mature Students. *Learning in Health and Social Care*, 4, 29-42.

Tuck, J. 2016. “‘Doing Something That’s Really Important’: Meaningful Engagement as a Resource for Teachers’ Transformative Work with Student Writers in the Disciplines.” In *Working with Academic Literacies: Case Studies Towards Transformative Practice*, edited by T. Lillis, K. Harrington, and M. Lea, 195–204. Fort Collins: The WAC Clearinghouse/Parlor Press.

Turner J (2004) Language as academic purpose. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 3(2): 95–109.

Vaara, E. (2010). Taking the linguistic turn seriously: Strategy as a multifaceted interdiscursive phenomenon. *Advances in Strategic Management*, 27, 29–50.

- Vermeer, H. J. (2004). Skopos and commission in translational action. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (2nd ed.). (pp. 221–232). London: Routledge
- Voloshinov, V.N. (1973). *Marxism and the philosophy of language*. New York: Seminar Press (L.Matejka, & I.R. Titunik, Trans.) (Original Work published 1929).
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar, Trans.) (Original Work published 1934).
- Ward, J. (2009). EAP reading and lexis for Thai engineering undergraduates. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 8(4), 294-301.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Werner, O., & Campbell, D. (1970). Translating, working through interpreters, and the problem of decentering. In R. Naroll, & R. Cohen (Eds.), *A handbook of method in cultural anthropology* (pp. 398–420). New York, NY: Natural History Press.
- West, M. (1953). *A general service list of English words*. London: Longman, Green.
- Williams, K. (2005). Lecturer and first year student (mis)understandings of assessment task verbs: 'Mind the gap'. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10, 157–173.
- Wingate, U. (2006). Doing away with 'study skills'. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11, 457-469. (cited in Cultures of Learning)
- Wingate, U. (2012). 'Argument!' helping students understand what essay writing is about. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 11(2), 145-154.
- Wingate, U. (2012). Using academic literacies and genre-based models for academic writing instruction: A 'literacy' journey. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 11(1), 26-37.
- Wingate, U. (2015). *Academic literacy and student diversity: The case for inclusive practice* (vol. 42). Multilingual Matters.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Woodward-Kron, R. (2002). Critical analysis versus description? Examining the relationship in successful student writing. *Journal of English for academic purposes*, 1(2), 121-143.

Wright-Mills, C. (1959). *The Sociological Imagination*. Pelican 1970

Xu, M., Huang, C., & You, X. (2016). Reasoning patterns of undergraduate theses in translation studies: An intercultural rhetoric study. *English for Specific Purposes*, 41, 68-81.

Yanow, D. (2014). Interpretive analysis and comparative research. In *Comparative policy studies* (pp. 131-159). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Yanow, D. (2000). *Conducting interpretive policy analysis* (Qualitative research methods; v. 47). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Yorke, M., & Thomas, L. (2003). Improving the retention of students from lower socio-economic groups. *Journal of higher education policy and management*, 25(1), 63-74.

Young, L. (2013). Systemic Functional Linguistics. In J. Simpson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 625 – 637). London: Routledge.

