

# LEARNING DISCOURSES AND DISCOURSES OF LEARNING ABSTRACTS

## Panel 1

### **Moore and Hough: The perils of skills: Towards a model of integrating graduate attributes into the disciplines**

The notion of graduate attributes - a surprisingly enduring idea in Australian higher education over the last decade or so - has been useful as a way of requiring academics and administrators to reflect seriously on the nexus between university learning and the demands that graduates will face in their subsequent professional lives.

A potential danger of this movement however, is that increasingly these attributes will be thought of as discrete skills to be developed on courses, with a concomitant downgrading of the role of disciplinary content. Manifestations of such a trend are the emergence in recent years of a variety of extra-disciplinary courses such as 'professional writing' and 'critical thinking', as well as a lingering interest in the idea of generic skills testing prior to graduation (eg. Graduate Skills Assessment test).

The main argument of this paper is that if the graduate attributes idea is to continue to be a useful one in the framing of university curricula, it is important that effective ways are found to integrate the development of these attributes within the context of the disciplines. We outline one such method – a possible framework for the analysis and creation of assessment tasks – which, we think, has general applicability to learning in any disciplinary setting. The key element of this framework is the notion of 'role' – which can be used to explore with students (and also confer on them) a range of academic and professional identities.

### **Jan Pinder Eliciting Professional Discourse in Assignments**

In university courses with a vocational orientation, students are often given assignments that require them to relate the theory they are learning to real-life-like situations, in ways that are intended to mirror tasks they may eventually encounter in the workplace. Whatever the limitations imposed by the institutional context on the ability of this kind of exercise to initiate students into professional discourse (Freedman *et al.*, 1994), it continues to be a highly-regarded teaching tool.

In this paper I want to consider, in the light of the work by Freedman and others on the differences between academic and professional learning and the ways professional discourse is learned, how this kind of assignment can function. I will draw on some research I did recently, prompted by the difficulties in understanding the requirements of this kind of assignment of students I have encountered as a Language and Academic Skills Advisor. I analysed a sample of 11 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year assignment tasks (from

Business and Economics subjects) that present a scenario and require the student to adopt a professional role. The tasks examined differed quite widely in degree of explicitness about the role the student writer was to adopt, and how this translated into expectations of genre and audience. There were also varying levels of detail in the contextualisation of the task. In this research I focused on issues affecting student understanding of the task, and the potential conflict between the writer roles of student and professional. Here I revisit these assignments, looking at the way they create a rhetorical context to elicit professional discourse, and how they deal with issues identified in the literature as potential barriers to learning.

### **Steve Price: Role conflation in the writing of undergraduate Law students**

In the course of their study, undergraduate Law students are often asked to assume professional roles when writing their assignments. For example, students may be asked to assume the role of a Judge and write a decision on an appeal, or they may be presented with the facts of a problem situation and then asked to assume the role of a professional lawyer and provide legal advice to one or more persons involved in that situation. Students are aware, however, that while the assignment attempts to simulate a professional task, the assignment is set within the university and they are writing for their lecturer. Demonstrating the heteroglossia Bakhtin recognised in all language use, there is a jostling of the student and professional voices, with the positioning of the writer as student bearing on the text in two ways; not only does it find representation in the text in its own right, but it is also the condition necessitating the production of the professional voice. Drawing on the schema established by Tim Moore and Brett Hough (see paper 1 above) this paper will briefly outline instances of such role conflation in set assignments. It will then comment briefly on the judgments made by students as they decide in what ways and the extent to which the written assignment should reflect these different roles. In particular, it will attempt to give a brief account of the constraints that seem most compelling for the students as they make their judgments.

### **Panel 2**

#### **Robyn Spence-Brown LEARNER MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN AN 'AUTHENTIC' TASK –INSIGHTS FROM ACTIVITY THEORY**

Learner engagement and motivation have long been regarded as key factors in learning success. This paper discusses case studies from an extended task in which students of Japanese interviewed a native speaker and wrote a report. It teases out the multi-layered

nature of the activity, and shows how individual students engaged with the task, and with the native speaker interviewee in rather different ways. Drawing on activity theory, the paper locates motivation at the nexus of socially defined and individually determined factors within an activity system. It shows how the individual's engagement is shaped within the socially constructed motives for the activity in which they participate – and how various factors such as competence and personal objectives, and the roles and identities of other interactants can influence the way in which a task is framed as an activity – often in ways not predicted by task designers. The paper argues that the way in which the interview task was framed as an activity by all participants, and the ways in which students were motivated to engage with the task and with others crucially affected the opportunities for learning which it afforded to students.

### **Chiharu Shima: AFFECT OF SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS ON LEARNERS' PAIR/GROUP WORK ACTIVITY**

As more attention has been paid to learner-centred language teaching and learning, the use of pair/group work is widespread in language classrooms. However, previous research on pair/group work has tended to focus on the linguistic interactions that take place between participants such as how they negotiate meaning, or how they manage imperfect utterances, and neglects to examine the social dynamics of pair/groups. Since a pair/group inevitably consists of multiple persons, it is feasible to assume that multiple proficiency, needs or goals exist in a group. Also, as each learner has his/her own background or academic experience, it seems natural for learners to experience different processes and forms of participation during the accomplishment of tasks. However, in a classroom, learners have to adjust and manage their behaviour for the accomplishment of the given pair/group work tasks. Without considering learners' sociocultural backgrounds which might affect their behaviour and contextual dimensions of language classrooms, the complex process of second language acquisition will not be well understood.

Recently, this sociocultural aspects of language learning has been gaining lots of attention, and an increasing number of studies has been conducted from the perspective of Sociocultural Theory in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (e.g. Donato 1994, Lantolf 2000, Ohta 2001). One of the prominent concepts in Sociocultural Theory is called Activity Theory (e.g. Leont'ev 1981, Lantolf 2000). According to Activity Theory, people engage in various activities are motivated by some needs which are directed towards a specific objective. To achieve this objective, actions are taken, and these actions are carried out in certain conditions. All these elements influence each other, hence the activity system is dynamic. In other words, Activity Theory explains the dynamic relationship between individual and social, cultural, historical and institutional contexts by providing basic principles for understanding human social activity which is motivated by individual motives or needs.

Based on the theoretical framework of Activity Theory, this study explores the sociocultural factors which seem to affect learners' behaviour during their engagement in pair/group work activity in a pre-intermediate level Japanese language classroom.

Triangulating video-recorded interactional data between learners of Japanese engaging in a group work task.

### **Masumi Kobayashi: Effect of mentoring on second language composition processes in Japanese**

Within the last few decades, a shift has occurred in the study of second language writing, away from a focus on the written products and form of writing towards the process of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Within the fields of second language acquisition research and teaching pedagogy increased attention has been paid to social interaction and social context, and a number of studies have examined the teacher-student conference (Fitzgerald & Stamm, 1992; McCarthey, 1994; Sperling, 1990; Walker & Elias, 1987) and peer writing/revision activities (Blake, 1992; Villamil & Guerrero, 1996) in which collaboration and negotiation are used to assist the students' composition. These studies provided a wide range of valuable insights in terms of sociocultural aspects, such as social mediation, and pedagogical aspects including suggestions for teachers in conducting writing conferences.

However, very few studies have been conducted focusing on the effect of interaction on students' composition in languages other than English and also outside the classroom. This study aims to contribute to understanding learners' composition processes, and in particular, how interaction effects second language composition and language learning, through examining informal mentoring for students preparing for the Japanese Language Speech Contest. Utilising informants' interactional data in revision sessions with native mentors, their multiple drafts as the basis of these sessions and retrospective data from follow-up interviews, this paper examines the processes of the students' composition and their collaborative work with the mentors. It highlights the ways in which these processes provided rich opportunities for language learning.

### **Panel 3**

#### **Rosemary Clerehan: Student writing in the academy: An ecological approach**

The student in higher education engages in a highly complex range of contact situations, a central one being the student-staff contact zone. For the student entering this zone from a different background culture and engaging in a series of "literacy events", the ecology becomes even more complex and diverse.

In taking account of the situated and dynamic nature of literacy practices, the paper addresses two broad research questions. First, it asks what institutions of higher education need to know to be able to support students, particularly international students, in their writing. It also asks what needs to be done as a consequence: that is: how can institutions support what can be termed a *learner curriculum* for student writing, and how can they develop an ecology of support for enhancing student writing. The approach

adopted comprehends ethnographic surveys to glean broad patterns of perceptions about literacy events and educational innovations; as well as discourse analysis – analysing texts which form part of the literacy events.

The paper explores how student writing in higher education can be conceptualised in order for the critical impact dimensions to be clearly understood, and students given appropriate support. Academic staff need to understand more profoundly the complex ecology of student writing, including students' struggles to creatively manage the tensions in disciplinary writing which are critical to disciplinary learning. This connects with debates around internationalisation of the curriculum, and the importance of privileging diversity and using it as a resource.

The Candlin (1998) and Candlin and Hyland (1999) conceptual framework of *texts*, *processes* and *practices* sets up approaches which can be used ethnographically to research, and also pedagogically to develop resources for, student writing. An ecological approach to the study of student writing in the academy, I argue, must therefore take into account three dimensions: language as text; language as social process; and language as institutional practice.

### **Robyn Woodward-Kron: Negotiating meanings and scaffolding learning: the nature of writing support consultations with non-English speaking background postgraduate students**

Language advisors and non-English speaking background (NESB) postgraduate students negotiate complex ideational, textual and interpersonal territory when working together to improve students' draft texts. However, the individual writing consultation is sometimes conceptualised one-dimensionally by faculty and other stakeholders as editing, with writing issues seen as separate from content and able to be addressed independently of content and context. Such a conceptualisation of writing support neglects the role of discussion for clarifying disciplinary values and expectations and jointly negotiating meaning. The individual writing consultation with graduate students has also only received scant attention in the applied linguistics and higher education literature. This paper examines the nature of writing support consultations with graduate NESB students. The research context is a Master of Public Health student's writing consultation, which was audio-taped and analysed for discourse and clause level features in order to identify the nature of the writing consultation as well as the range of meanings which were addressed in the consultation. The findings show that the consultation was a dynamic, interactive exchange, in which a range of meanings were addressed and negotiated. The findings also show that the lecturer's spoken interactions with the student scaffolded the student's academic writing development and learning.

These findings form the analytical framework for a larger study into writing support consultations with NESB graduate students. The study aims to identify the nature of writing support in a range of teaching contexts. It also compares two types of writing consultations: that is, conceptualizing and writing the first draft, and interpreting

supervisors' comments. The outcomes of this larger project should provide a greater understanding of the nature and potential of individual writing support consultations, understandings which are needed to inform discussions on postgraduate policies and guidelines for providing language support to NESB students.

### **Gavin Melles: Discourses, genres, and cultural models in learning to critically appraise the medical research literature**

Acquiring expert status in academic communities of practice involves the ability to produce relevant textual genres according to conventions of discipline specific academic literacies (Hyland, 2000). Second language writers must contend not only with interpreting the relevant discourses of the disciplines and genre conventions but also different cultural models of literacy (Gee & Green, 1998). Educational research into the socially situated production of texts explores the process of interpreting discourses of medicine in the literature and producing the texts informed by different cultural models of academic literacy (Freebody, 2003). Novice undergraduate second language researchers from Indonesia completing an intercalated BMedSci degree are initiated into the process of reviewing the research literature in their fields through a critical review of three original research articles during a team taught research bridging program (Melles, 2005a, 2005b). This ethnographically informed discourse analytic study examines the first stage in the two semester processes of reading original research, interpreting genre requirements, and the cultural models faculty and students bring to the critical appraisal within an academic literacy as social practice framework.

### **Panel 4**

#### **Louisa Willoughby: "DON'T BE SO LOUD – AND SPEAK ENGLISH": SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICIES TOWARDS CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Along with the tertiary sector, Australian secondary schools have experienced massive growth in their international student numbers, with enrolment numbers nationally more than doubling in the past five years (AEI 2005). In 2004, over 200 Victorian state secondary schools accepted international student enrolments and between them catered for over 8000 international students, around half of whom were Chinese nationals (AEI 2005). While the majority of state secondary schools accept international student enrolments, most are still finding their feet when it comes to issues in international student education. In particular, schools have been unsure of the best way to develop their students' English skills to a point where they can successfully sit year 12 exams (Love and Arkoudis 2003); with anecdotal evidence that many schools turn to barring international students from speaking their home languages at school as a way to force them to practice their English.

This paper takes as its starting point one Melbourne high school where approximately 1/3 of all VCE students are Chinese international students. Through ethnographic

methods it examines the ways in which official school policy and unofficial norms of behaviour shape Chinese international students' use of English and Mandarin while at school, and the implications of this for the development of English competency and school success. Drawing on the notion of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1992, Wenger 1998) it argues that many of the school's official moves to encourage international students to speak only English while at school are contradicted by other aspects of the school's structure which implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, foster the use of Mandarin. While many teachers at the school decry the degree to which international students speak Mandarin with each other, the paper will demonstrate that using Mandarin at school can help international students develop valuable subject knowledge and social networks (Cf. Goldstein 2003). At the same time, Mandarin-based friendship groups can isolate international students from their local student peers and thus severely limit their opportunities for interactions with English native speakers. In closing the paper stresses the need for schools to understand the cumulative effect of their official policies and unofficial practices on international students' language use while at school and to strike a balance between encouraging students to practice English and utilising the home language as a valuable resource for learning.

### **Naomi Kurata: SOCIAL AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS INFLUENCING L1/L2 USE IN LEARNERS' SOCIAL NETWORK CONTEXTS: A CASE STUDY OF LEARNERS OF JAPANESE IN AUSTRALIA**

There has been an increasing interest in contextual and social dimensions of language learning, and a number of researchers argue that an awareness of these dimensions ought to be enhanced in SLA research (Firth and Wagner 1997; Tarone 1997, 2000; Norton 2000). It has been claimed that one of the major social factors that affect L2 development is the relationship between learners and their interactants (Goodnow 1993; van Lier 1998; Storch 2002). However, research on L2 learning in learners' social networks has been underdeveloped.

This paper reports on some findings of a study of the outcome of L1/L2 use that occurs in learners' social networks in terms of opportunities for L2 learning. The study applies a framework utilising Cummins' (1996, 2000) concept of interpersonal space and Norton's (1995, 2000) concept of investment in foreign language use and learning within learners' social network settings. Cummins (1996, 2000) argues that our interaction constantly shapes interpersonal space where the dual processes of reciprocal negotiation of identity and collaborative generation of knowledge take place. The concept of investment signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practise it (Norton 1995, 2000). Drawing on these concepts, this paper examines how opportunities of L1/L2 use between learners and their social network participants are socially constructed.

Utilising informants' ethnographic interview data as well as their actual interactional data, such as email and on-line chat scripts, I have found that the informants' investment in L2 and their history as L2 users, and also that of their network participants influence language selection and in turn to language learning opportunities.

This paper also discusses the conditions under which learners are comfortable or uncomfortable in using L2.

## **Yuko Masuda: NEGOTIATION OF LANGUAGE SELECTION IN LANGUAGE EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIPS**

With the expansion of interaction in and across cultures, the opportunities to study at overseas universities have increased. Such students can improve their second language (L2) by actually living and studying in L2 settings. This kind of cross-cultural educational opportunity may also allow learners in foreign language (FL) learning situations to interact with speakers of their FL. In this way, the trend of internationalisation of university education has created more opportunities for language learners to meet and interact with their counterparts from different areas or countries. Language Exchange Partnerships (LEP) is one of the settings that provide language learners with the FL/L2 use opportunities within university contexts.

LEP refer to pairs of language learners or users who meet each other regularly primarily for the purpose of reciprocal language practice but also to establish a cross-cultural friendship. Although the study here deals with an Australian setting, similar arrangements are found in other overseas universities and constitute important social contexts where L2 learners and users interact outside of classroom settings. Since participants have an interest in using their FL/ L2, how pairs negotiate their selection of language is of central interest.

This paper will report on the language selection which characterises four to six LEP involving learners of Japanese and Japanese native speakers who are undertaking a course at the same Australian university. In particular, I will analyse how the participants negotiate their use of English and Japanese, and will also discuss how they evaluate such language selection. This study will adopt a conversational analytic approach (Auer 1988, 1998) to explore the various factors that influence the participants' selection of language.

To date, an analysis of two LEP has found that although the partners had some awareness that the equal use of both languages was desirable for each other, this did not necessarily occur in their actual interactions. Furthermore, each pair displayed different patterns of language use. In the first pair, there were sequences of the language negotiation where the partners came to agree on one common language, while, in the other pair, the Japanese interactant did not necessarily accommodate to the language that his Australian partner used in their interaction. Despite the importance of the topic of language selection in bilingual contact situations, it is one which has been given insufficient attention to date.

## Panel 5

### **Patrick Durel: DYNAMICS OF INTERACTION IN COMPUTER-AIDED COLLABORATIVE REVISION OF TEXTS: AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS**

From March to June 2003, we observed 10 pairs of advanced level students of French at Monash who, as part of normal classroom activities, worked collaboratively at revising a text originally produced by one of the member of the dyad. The computer-aided environment in which students worked included *Antidote* (grammar assistant software) and *Lexibase* (French/English electronic bilingual dictionary). Each session was recorded with a mini-DV camera. In parallel, a full motion recording of screen action was made using screen recording software. We subsequently post-synchronised the screen action video file with the backup audio track made for each session. We will examine the various processes involved in computer-aided collaborative revision, a task which requires verbal interaction from the learners in order to coordinate their activities. We will also examine the impact grammar assistant usage has, thus highlighting the dynamics of interaction in a collaborative revision activity. An exploratory analysis of the data will allow us to identify various practical work sequences which make up such sessions, their focus as well as the chaining of the various phases and operations within these sequences. Highlighting the complexity of cognitive and metacognitive activities simultaneously engaged in these sequences, we will use examples from screen action videos correlated with the corresponding transcription of verbal interactions to discuss instances of co-enunciation and negotiation. We will show how these relate to co-actions during different phases (planning at micro or macro level, formulation/reformulation, focus on software's suggestions and contextual explanations). In this context, we will examine how interactants manage both local (morphosyntactic accuracy, lexicon and reformulation) and global (text construction, pragmatic orientation) revision issues.

We are studying the computer-aided revision process in a collaborative situation in which conversational interaction and screen action become means for the examination of the dynamics involved. From a theoretical point of view, we understand the process of collectively revising a text in such an environment as being both distributed and situated. The methodology we use is anchored in the interactionist and constructivist paradigm. Drawing on a conversationalist approach, however, we analyze in an intricate way the verbal interactions and the handling of the tools that constitute the environment of the task. We show how actions are subject to negotiations which are joint and anchored in the environment and which allow situated and distributed cognitions to be generated. At a pedagogical level, we believe that these issues have implications for second language writing instruction, in particular regarding our understanding of how such activities in a computer-aided environment can contribute to the development of learners' writing and revision skills.

## **Yuusuke Sakurai: DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN COMPUTER COMPOSING BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS OF JAPANESE IN DIFFERENT PROFICIENCY GROUPS**

More and more people are nowadays doing the majority of their writing on screen and communicating digitally rather than on paper (Warschauer, 1999; Gottlieb, 2000). Initial reluctance has now given way to a widespread acceptance and use of computers as a tool for writing. It is not only native speakers, but also many language learners who employ computers to write their course assignments, to send emails to their key-pals, and to enjoy online chatting. This situation may also be common for students of Japanese in Australian universities. However, much is still unknown about the effect of computers on student's composing behaviour.

In the area of second language education, researchers have investigated the relevance of student's language competency and their writing performance on a computer. Moeller (2002, p.15) claims that it seems more difficult for novice EFL writers to compose on a computer than for the advanced. There have been few attempts investigating how learners' proficiency level affects typewriting products and processes within the existing literature on Japanese as a foreign language. Some studies examined computer-writing behavior of advanced learners studying in Japan. These studies have found that even intermediate and advanced learners have difficulty in thoroughly acquiring Japanese double consonants, contracted sounds, and nasal sounds in order to type Japanese on a computer. However, those studies examined written products, not writing processes, and informants' Japanese proficiency was extremely high. Chikamatsu (2003) reports that students of the average proficiency group at intermediate level employed significantly more kanji when word-processing than those of the high and low proficiency groups as opposed to handwriting, but Chikamatsu did not investigate why this was the case.

The current project examined computer-writing behavior and written products of students of Japanese in different proficiency groups. A retrospective interview method was also employed to investigate writers' composing processes. The study revealed that there were differences in keyboarding behaviour, and kanji/katakana character selection amongst students. A similarity was found in their typing behaviour, which might be caused by their unfamiliarity with technical functions of Japanese word processors. This project suggests that lower level students have difficulties in choosing appropriate kanji words from the list provided by a computer and that even advanced students do not become fully familiarised with the Japanese Input Method Editor (IME). This study also points out that it is necessary for students who start to write Japanese on a computer to learn comprehensive usage of Japanese IME regarding not only typing Romanized Japanese, but also parsing and converting it.

### **Panel 6**

**John Hamilton: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ORAL PARTICIPATION LEVELS OF VIETNAMESE POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS STUDYING IN AUSTRALIA**

This paper examines the experiences of Vietnamese students studying at postgraduate level in Australia, attempting to understand their learning behaviour from their own perspectives and that of Vietnamese culture. The broad focus of the paper is the attitudes of the Vietnamese students to the teaching and learning styles they experience in the Australian tertiary environment. The specific focus is oral participation – the study identifies factors that influence the level and nature of participation of Vietnamese students. Although this is far from a new area for research, the particular value of this study is in the extent to which it gives voice to the Vietnamese students themselves. The study sought to subjectively ‘test’ the often expressed view that compared to their Australian counterparts overseas Asian students typically adopt a less dynamic approach to learning and take a lower profile in terms of oral participation. Study findings supported this view, but challenged some of the pre-conceived notions about possible causes for this behaviour, both within Vietnamese and Australian universities. Study data was generated by means of a survey and in-depth interviews, and illustrative quotes are used extensively in presenting this data. The study found that Vietnamese students do value oral participation as a learning method, despite a range of language, cultural, affective and content-related factors conspiring to make participation difficult for them. The study also found that, even though finding it considerably more demanding than learning approaches they have experienced previously, many Vietnamese students are enthusiastic about being independent learners, and recognise how skills developed through this approach will benefit them in both the short and longer terms.

The study confirms that for most Vietnamese the transition from the Vietnamese to the Australian education system is a challenging process and that considerable adaptation is required in order for Vietnamese postgraduate students to function effectively in Australia. It establishes that a range of factors influence Vietnamese students in terms of their oral participation behaviour, and that these fall into three broad categories: language proficiency, cultural and affective factors and content knowledge and awareness. The paper concludes by suggesting that whilst Australian universities have increased efforts to prepare international students for study in Australia, there has been only limited recognition of the fact that the quality of interaction with local staff and students is a major component of the international student experience, and a significant influence on participation behaviour. The suggestion is made that in tandem with programs designed to prepare and support international students universities need to implement programs to better prepare local staff and local students for what is an increasingly diverse educational environment. In essence, a more holistic approach is advocated.

## **Rintaro Imafuku: A case study of a medical PBL tutorial: tutor and student participation**

In recent years, in Australian higher education, the Problem-based learning (PBL) approach has increasingly been adopted as the preferred pedagogy across a range of programmes, including courses in medicine. PBL is a pedagogical approach used in a number of discipline areas to foster decision-making strategies, reasoning skills and self-directed learning skills through small group discussion. In the PBL medical classroom, students negotiate meanings in order to specify clinical issues and learning objectives from a case scenario. The tutor's role is less concerned with providing clinical knowledge and mainly involves facilitating and scaffolding students' learning. The pedagogical characteristics of PBL, which are different from those of a traditional classroom, are intended to be highly interactive and student-directed.

In the context of the increasing globalisation of Australian medical education and the greater use of PBL methods, there is a need to investigate how students and tutors manage their participation in PBL tutorials. The purpose of this study is to examine the oral participation in PBL tutorials of third year undergraduate medical students at an Australian university. Specifically, the study will firstly identify the prescribed PBL curriculum at an Australian university. Secondly, I will also examine how the participants, including Australian and overseas students and their tutor, apply the prescribed PBL approach in their tutorial. The study selected a PBL group which consists of Australian and overseas students, and conducted follow-up interviews as well as recording and observing the PBL tutorial. The analysis of the oral discourse patterns involved the application of the Eggins and Slade's (1997) speech functional theory which is underpinned by Halliday's (1994) systemic functional grammar. This conceptual framework allows us to grasp the participation patterns of students and tutor from a speech functional perspective.

By demonstrating the speech functions produced by students and tutors, the paper will illustrate the general picture of how social relationships between participants are negotiated in the PBL tutorials. In addition to the recorded data, follow-up interview data will be presented to provide insights into communication issues in tutorials where Australian and overseas students contribute as a group.

### **Panel 7**

#### **Tim Moore: What is 'critical thinking'? Or shewing the fly out of the fly bottle**

The importance attached to 'critical thinking' in modern higher education dates back at least to Newman, and has seen very explicit expression in recent times in the 'graduate attributes' movement. But despite an almost unanimous belief in 'critical thinking' as an educational ideal, there is surprisingly little agreement among scholars about what this ability entails exactly, as well as how it is best taught on university programs. In this paper, I explore the definition question, and also try to help resolve the impasse that arguably has been reached (Atkinson, 1998).

In the first part of the paper, I will briefly survey the more influential, competing definitions of ‘critical thinking’ that have been proposed (Ennis, Norris, McPeck and others), as well as the definitional methodologies which underlie each of these. I shall conclude this section by arguing that a productive approach to the definitional problem – one not so far tried in the literature - is broadly a Wittgensteinian one, wherein the meaning of a term is taken to be the way in which it is ‘used’ in discourse. In the second part of the paper, I will outline my attempt to operationalise this method in some empirical research that investigated conceptions of critical thinking held by academics—both in the way they discuss the concept in interview, and the way it is inscribed in their teaching and assessment practices. The research covers the disciplines of history, philosophy, and cultural studies. The reporting of the results is focussed on certain ‘key words’ that emerged from a computer-driven analysis of data - *viz* ‘argument’, ‘knowledge’, ‘reason’, ‘judgement’, ‘evidence’, ‘source’, ‘conclusion’, ‘claim’, ‘theory’. I shall conclude by considering how these associated vocabularies might be used for teaching purposes – both to clarify the concept of critical thinking to students, as well as to help them negotiate possible interdisciplinary variations they may encounter.

### **Kara M. Gilbert: THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY OF LEARNING TO ARGUE IN DISCIPLINARY (CON)TEXTS**

The ability to argue is integral to academic competency and facilitates participation in local and international discourse communities. Yet, tertiary students are not always explicitly advised on how to use and incorporate arguments in their academic texts. More often, through their engagement with genres, students implicitly acquire appropriate conventions of academic argument as they learn skills of academic literacy. In fact, the acquisition of academic literacy has special significance in modern tertiary contexts where students from various linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds and with diverse experiences of genres and discourse communities of writing are challenging the conventions of established disciplinary communities (Matsuda 1997).

In the study, the use of arguments in the coursework essays written as part of the normal course requirements by a group of six Japanese native speakers and seven Australian English native speakers enrolled in an Australian tertiary undergraduate humanities program are investigated. The study is a qualitative case study investigation of writing in naturally occurring academic contexts, supplemented by semi-structured, text-based interviews with the students while they were writing their essays to determine the social and cognitive processes that drive argument construction and to validate the identification, interpretation and reconstruction of the arguments in their written discourse. Drawing on the findings from two of the students in the study, a Japanese student, A, and an Australian student, B, the socio-cognitive complexity of argument construction in disciplinary contexts will be discussed. Not surprisingly, Western scholars have overwhelmingly relied on Anglo- and Euro-centric models of argumentation as normative references of argument structure and quality in a variety of research contexts,

disregarding plurality of practice within socio-cultural contexts. However, it will be argued that logical, rhetorical and dialectical elements of argumentation theory may be incorporated into a functional analytic framework to account for diversity of discourse patterns observed in the academic texts of students' learning the disciplinary conventions of written academic arguments.

The process-orientated analysis of argument construction in written discourse that is employed in this study challenges traditional product-based methodological approaches. The present analysis relies on naturalistic, qualitative methods to examine the complexity of interactions between writers' cognitive processes, their social or disciplinary contexts and the production of argument in their academic texts. In researching academic literacy, it will be shown that research methodology that blends linguistic description of text with ethnographic interpretations of participants and processes and sociologically grounded accounts of writing practices is a valid and useful approach for providing sound explanations of textual form (Candlin, 1998).

### **Lorraine Bullock: A socio-cultural approach to English as an international language: revisiting the discourse community.**

The continued expansion of English as an international language increases the range of cultural perceptions captured within the language and continues to create new possibilities for understanding and interpretation. One of the most important influences that shapes meaning within the language situation is culture, or more importantly, worldview. The relationship between language and culture is a complex one which can influence situational meaning as speakers interact from positions of conflicting worldviews.

As the influence of worldview usually operates beneath the level of conscious thought it can create problems for the multilingual\* speaker of English who may have grown up in a culture with a very different worldview to the one experienced in Australia. An example of the influence of a distinct worldview can be seen in the language expectations within tertiary study in Australia. In Australian tertiary institutions the numbers of multilingual students and local students from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds are increasing. These students bring with them knowledge of English that may be linguistically compatible with the language of their instruction, but it represents quite a different worldview. To successfully communicate within this discourse community multilingual and multicultural students need to understand a range of new worldviews that will assist them in their study and yet will not colonize their own cultural norms by imposing an ideological perception of English language and cultural practices. One way of exploring the differences between world views is through the model of the discourse community. The particular model of the discourse community presented in this paper demonstrates how the social and cultural determination of the texts and language practices shared by the participants within the specific language situation can be understood without the imposition of cultural hegemony.

This paper will present a model of the discourse community that has its roots in both Halliday's context of culture and Swales' model of the discourse community but also

includes an exploration of the ideologically and culturally determined language expectations with which multilingual students must interact in the specific context of an Australian university. The model of the discourse community is one way of explaining why all the participants in a particular situation share the same expectations of language and text. This model highlights an important aspect of language, that choice is influenced by factors outside the language itself. Socio-cultural expectations are important influences in how a text is shaped and its language chosen. While there are many ways of looking at how language choices are made, the discourse community offers a practical model of language selection, especially for the multilingual speaker of English. It demonstrates how language, worldview and context work together to develop the way in which meaning is formed in specific language situations.

\*Multilingual speaker of English. In the course, *English as an International Language* we refer to speakers whose first language is not English (formerly, second language speakers) as multilingual speakers of English in order to address the often unintentional but nevertheless negative, culturally determined, ideological associations with the concept of "second". In this we not only reflect but also agree with the current position taken in most of the current literature

## **Panel 8**

### **Helen Marriott: LANGUAGE PLANNING FOR THE SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Universities constitute important sites for language planning and policy making in relation to the provision of support for international and other students enrolled in their various programs. One of the main measures implemented by Australian universities is the employment of specialised staff to facilitate the participation of students who experience language or academic study difficulties, particularly, but not exclusively, international students. Such staff may meet and advise individual students or plan and implement training programs for groups of students, among other functions. These kinds of advisory or training roles have often been carried out along side of, but separate to, students' main academic courses, though there are also instances of collaboration between language advisors and disciplinary personnel in relation to the identification of student needs and in the planning and implementation of strategies and programs of support.

The setting of this study is two health science-related faculties at an Australian university. Although there are major differences in the multilingual and multicultural background characteristics of the students across the two faculties, the growth of newly-arrived international students is a new phenomenon in both faculties and given the expectation of the continuation of this trend, language planning activity is currently being accelerated. I will seek to identify the kinds of language planning that takes place at the meso and micro levels. In addition, I aim to explore some of the discourses that arise from time to time among of the teaching and administrative staff participants and will consider how these discourses may impact on the work of the language advisors in relation to language planning. These discourses include the claim that international students may experience problems (often described as issues) in relation to language and culture, and that it is the

language advisors who are responsible for looking after such international students' special needs. The belief that it is only international students who need special support can also be identified.

### **Kuniko Yoshimitsu: JAPANESE STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY**

This paper presents a qualitative case study which examines Japanese students' learning behaviour at an Australian university, with a particular focus on how an international student sought to become a confident member of the host academic community and successfully gained an undergraduate degree in Arts. The study employed a process-oriented approach and its analytical framework is grounded on the language management model (Neustupny, 1985; Jernudd and Neustupný, 1987) and the theory of academic contact situation (Neustupny 2004). In the examination of academic contact situations, Neustupný (2004: 5) argues that researchers should place a focus on "what happens in the process of contact" rather than on "the result of the contact process", and that it is essential to make an inquiry into how problems (i.e. deviations from norms) in academic interaction are noted, evaluated and how adjustment is subsequently sought by the participants. Through the close examination of a student's learning behaviour, this study illustrates how micro-level management was carried out and presents specific features in the process of academic contact. With its emphasis on the process of the learner's participation in a new community, the notion of "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) provides the study with a useful means to describe the learning processes of participants in a new academic community.

The data was gathered through a student questionnaire followed by a semi-structured interview, collecting the student's study journals and follow-up interviews with the student. Journal study is considered to be one of the most effective methods, in that journals reflect upon aspects of the learner's own learning processes. Using these methods, this study attempts to depict an international student's experiences at an Australian university. Despite the existing problems of non-English background students, who are said to be unprepared for study demands at their host university, there has been little empirical research on study management processes of these students. Thus, this study will contribute toward better understanding of their needs to participate in a new academic community.

### **Hiroyuki Nemoto: The incomplete participation in academic contact situations: Japanese exchange students in an Australian university**

Students' participation in a new academic discourse community does not guarantee that they progressively become fuller participants in it. Thus, it is necessary to pay close attention to the obstacles to increasing their participation by particularly investigating

unsuccessful cases of academic participation. However, despite a number of empirical studies of students' cross-cultural academic adjustment, a dearth of research has comprehensively analysed the process in which students' incomplete participation occurs. The principal limitation of this type of research is that the students, who discontinue their participation, become subsequently unavailable to researchers. The in-depth ethnographic approach, which this study utilises, covers such a shortcoming and enables an exploration of the incomplete participation in academic contact situations by Japanese exchange students at their Australian host university.

Japanese exchange students are required to participate in regular courses alongside local students immediately after transferring from their home to host discourse communities. Thus, the students, depending on their disciplines and academic backgrounds, can experience severe adjustment processes. This study deals with academic struggles of six Japanese exchange students, particularly focussing on two of the students, who discontinued their one-academic-year studies at the host university. On the basis of language management framework and the concept of legitimate peripheral participation, the investigation is made about the discursive processes in which they manage academic tasks in conjunction with participation in class and social participation in the host community.

The data collection procedures, including a diary study, interviews with students, and a collection of written documents, allow my study to triangulate the data and to present a thick ethnographic description. The findings illustrate individual different developmental processes of academic participation, while reporting on the differences between completed and incomplete participation. In particular, this paper suggests that the ways that the students participate in the Australian academic context can be frequently changed as a result of their development of goals, motivational investments, social networks, and academic management competence. The multifaceted analyses of these interplaying components of participation further lead this study to identify various cognitive and sociocultural factors affecting the developmental processes of participation. The study reveals that the two incomplete cases occurred in relation to the students' unsuccessful transfer of their previous knowledge and skills, failure to evaluate their management strategies, insufficient management of situated identities, and limited establishment of situations where the exchange students could position themselves favourably.

## **Panel 9**

### **Julie Bradshaw and Andrea Truckenbrodt: Are LOTE Classrooms Gendered?**

LOTE teachers and others with an interest in languages lament the low participation rate of boys in post-compulsory secondary (year 9+) LOTE classes. While there are dramatic falls in participation rates of both boys and girls in language learning in year 10 and above, more boys than girls abandon language study. In this project we document this phenomenon using official statistics, and explore some possible reasons drawing on

reflective journals of tertiary students and questionnaire data from students in an independent school. We explore the reasons why boys' participation in language study declines, and ask why some boys return to language study at tertiary level. We will consider whether languages are differently gendered (e.g. is French seen as more feminine than German or Japanese?), and build on work by Barton (2002) on the positive effects of single sex instruction, but our main focus will be on the classroom culture and whether certain activity types and work patterns are likely to evoke a different response in girls and boys.

### **Akiko Ryuumon: The washback of the VCE Japanese Second Language examinations on teaching and learning**

It is widely believed in the field of education and applied linguistics that testing influences teaching and learning. This concept is referred to as 'washback' (Alderson & Wall, 1993), 'backwash' (Biggs cited in Cheng, 2000: 1), or 'test impact' (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). It is commonly accepted that washback exists in any type of assessment, in which test results affect test-takers' future, and thus are regarded as high-stakes tests. Examples of such tests are the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) in America and the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) examinations in Australia, which are used for university selection.

Alderson and Wall (1993) reported that 'poor' tests could have positive washback if teachers and learners do 'good' things, for instance, teachers prepare lessons more thoroughly and students work more to improve their skills. They claimed that the notion of washback is neutral and washback is independent of the quality of tests (Alderson & Wall, 1993: 117-118).

Cheng (2000) believes that an examination carried out in different educational contexts taken by different participants at different times would reveal quite different pictures, since he believes that washback is a complex phenomenon where various factors interact with each other. However, research on washback has not received very much empirical attention to date, and thus the nature and scope of washback has not been identified (Bailey, 1996: 275-276). Moreover, while washback research has focused on English as a second language, washback research on the Japanese language is highly underdeveloped. In addition, the washback for the Japanese VCE examinations in Victoria has not been examined despite the high-stakes nature of the examinations.

The current study uses interviews with teachers and other observers to explore the nature and scope of the washback, of the VCE Japanese Second Language examinations on teaching, and suggests some of the factors that may influence washback in this context.

## **Panel 10**

## **Young A Cho: Korean Students' Study Strategies and their Communication Networks**

The purpose of this study is to explore the issue of the difficulties Korean students experience while studying abroad. This study will examine how students' previous study experiences in Korea contribute to the difficulties they confront in adapting to new academic contexts at Australian universities. The paper describes the application of LPP (legitimate peripheral participation) to understand learning as a socially situated process. The study used a combination of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to elicit some of the issues at play in adjusting to a new academic system. The information collected through these interviews included students' perceptions about the differences between Korean and Australian universities' educational systems, the main difficulties they have in studying at Australian universities, the types of study strategies employed and their communication networks. In the analysis of data, the focus will be on determining factors related to the study strategies used.

## **Ayako Wakimoto: PEER NETWORKS OF INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL STUDENTS IN AN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY**

The number of international students enrolling in medical faculties of Australian universities has been increasing significantly in recent years, thus resulting in the emergence of a student body that is characterised by diversity in cultural backgrounds and languages spoken. In addition, the medical curriculum at some universities has been undergoing radical changes in recent years. It is claimed that most international students experience isolation from local students during their medical education because of their different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Treloar *et al.* 2000).

Drawing upon Bochner *et al.* (1977), previous studies examining the peer networks of international students in a new academic community tend to be concerned with mainly three categorisations of networks: that is, co-national or monocultural networks; bicultural networks consisting of international students and host nationals; and multicultural networks. Bochner *et al.* argue that co-national networks would play a role in maintaining cultural values while bicultural networks would lead to academic support. Moreover, the function of multicultural networks is regarded as predominantly providing recreational activities. Kudo (2003), however, recently proposed a modified functional model of Bochner *et al.*, indicating more detailed functions of peer networks. Based on research investigating Japanese students studying at an Australian university, Kudo proposes four functions of peer networks: providing social needs; supporting to solve academic and daily problems; learning the host culture; and adjusting cultural identity.

Given the globalisation of the host country as well as the home country of international students, it is necessary to add extra dimension in the previous categorisations to further investigate the complexity of the peer networks of international students. This study,

therefore, seeks to examine the peer networks of four first year international students in the faculty of medicine during their medical education at an Australian university.

On the basis of data obtained through interaction interviews that focussed on students' activities for a period of one week, I will analyse individual peer networks in conjunction with the kinds of support which the individuals receive through their peer networks. Furthermore, I will also attempt to investigate the way in which such individual peer networks were formed by analysing various factors such as students' educational history, cultural background and their place of residence.

The findings so far indicate that multicultural networks play a significant role in facilitating support for international medical students' study. Furthermore, it is found that even within co-national networks, students' cultural backgrounds as well as shared languages vary to a great extent. In addition, it is also found that even local and international students sometimes share cultural background to a large extent because of the increasing number of local students who had migrated from the same country as some of the other international students. A detailed examination of peer networks thus reveals considerable multiplicity of social interaction of international students.