10 PRISEAL and ERPP

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Abstract / Resumen

This coda begins by referring back to earlier PRISEAL conferences before discussing some of the terminological issues associated with the PRISEAL and ERPP acronyms, and lamenting the fact that presenting has not featured much at PRISEAL, in spite of it being in the title of the conference. The chapter singles out for brief discussion three of the chapters in the edited collection which resonate with the author's personal interests and experience, those of Neculai, Cargill and Li, and Moreno and Burgess. This is followed by a brief summary of the author's own presentation at PRISEAL, which was on the topic of ERPP as a field, before concluding by looking forward to the next PRISEAL conference in 2026.

Esta coda comienza remitiéndose a conferencias anteriores de PRISEAL antes de abordar algunas cuestiones terminológicas relacionadas con los acrónimos PRISEAL y ERPP y lamentar que la presentación oral no haya tenido una presencia destacada en PRISEAL, a pesar de formar parte del título de la conferencia. El capítulo selecciona para un breve análisis tres de los capítulos de la colección editada que resuenan con los intereses y la experiencia personal del autor: los de Neculai, Cargill y Li, y Moreno y Burgess. A continuación, se presenta un breve resumen de la ponencia del autor en PRISEAL, centrada en ERPP como campo de estudio, antes de concluir con una mirada hacia la próxima conferencia PRISEAL, que se celebrará en 2026.

PRISEAL and Other Acronyms

I was honoured to be one of the plenary speakers at the first PRISEAL conference organised in 2007 by Sally Burgess and Margaret Cargill at La Laguna University in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain. Since that time, I have been fortunate to be able to attend subsequent PRISEAL conferences at the Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal (2015), and the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute for Languages, University of Iceland (2018), only missing out on

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PRISEAL 2011 at the University of Silesia, Poland. Returning to Tenerife for PRISEAL 2023, where I again attended as a presenter, was thus a full-circle moment for me and in PRISEAL's history.

At the time of the first PRISEAL conference in 2007, the challenges faced by academics whose first language was not English were only beginning to be recognized. Since then, the field—referred to for the first time in the literature as English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) in the special journal issue of conference papers edited by Cargill and Burgess (2008)—has advanced significantly, both in terms of publishing new research and raising awareness of the challenges faced by what are now termed plurilingual scholars. As evidence of this development, the PRISEAL conference, as indicated above, has become a regular event, the *Journal of English for Research Publication Purposes* has been established as a dedicated outlet for scholarship in the field, the book series *Routledge Studies in English for Research Publication Purposes* has been established, and an introductory textbook devoted to ERPP has been published (Flowerdew & Habibie, 2021).

While early research primarily employed textual or qualitative approaches, recent studies have increasingly incorporated quantitative methods to measure the additional burden placed on plurilingual scholars as compared to their Anglophone counterparts. For example, Hanauer and Englander (2011) and Hanauer, Sheridan, and Englander (2019) used survey data to demonstrate the extra time and effort multilingual scholars require when writing in English compared to their first language. Similarly, a recent large-scale study published in *PLOS Biology* by Amano et al. (2023) quantified the extent to which plurilingual researchers—particularly early-career scholars in environmental sciences—invest significantly more time and financial resources than their Anglophone colleagues in activities such as reading and writing research papers, preparing presentations in English, and disseminating findings in multiple languages. At the same time, language barriers may discourage plurilingual scholars from attending or delivering oral presentations at international conferences conducted in English.

Neither the title of the conference, "Publishing and Presenting Research Internationally: Issues for Speakers of English as an Additional Language", nor the term "English for Research Publication Purposes", which, as already noted, subsequently derived from the conference, are uncontested. To take the conference title first, it is likely that "Speakers of English as an Additional Language" was preferred clearly to "nonnative speakers", which had been critiqued at the time as discriminatory (Cook, 1999; Davies, 2003). The prefix *"non-"* defines scholars by what they lack (native status) rather than by their actual linguistic and academic competencies. At the same time, it reinforces

the idea that native speakers are the ideal standard, while nonnative speakers are somehow deficient. Furthermore, the concept of a "native speaker" is also problematic because it assumes that language competence is static, ignoring that people develop and refine their language skills over time (which is especially true as novice scholars develop their competence with experience). Furthermore, many so-called native speakers do not necessarily have expertise in academic English, while many "nonnative" speakers have high levels of academic proficiency.

However, EAL is also problematic for some of the same reasons, with the term plurilingual scholar now seemingly preferred as being more positive, avoiding the native/non-native binary and acknowledging scholars' full linguistic repertoires rather than reducing them to their relationship with English. Indeed, for many so-called EAL scholars, English is actually their first language when it comes to their professional/academic life, the mother tongue being reserved for more informal situations. These scholars may also need to publish in more than one language, unlike their Anglophone counterparts. Of course, the term plurilingual scholar may unintentionally exclude monolingual scholars, creating a new divide (Habibie, 2019). So, it seems there is no ideal designation.

Turning now to the term "English for Research Publication Purposes" and the ERPP acronym, the advantages, of course, are numerous. It delineates a clear area of research and practice as a subfield of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and the genre-specific skills required in order to publish in English. It is an acknowledgment of the fact that English is the global lingua franca of research and publication. It promotes awareness of disciplinary conventions, helping researchers communicate effectively in their fields. And it implicitly recognises that there is a need for support in the development of professional writing and publication skills. Nevertheless, based on similar arguments rehearsed above, it can be argued that, in helping scholars conform to English-language norms, ERPP reinforces the hegemony of English in academic publishing, potentially marginalizing multilingual knowledge production. Furthermore, it reinforces English-only publication policies. For these reasons, some have argued for alternative acronyms, such as for Writing for Research and Publication Purposes (WRPP) (Neculai, this volume) or Languages for Research Publication Purposes (LRPP) (Introduction, this volume; Moreno and Burgess, this volume).

I would also like to add one further comment on the title of the conference. In the PRISEAL acronym, the letter "P" stands for both *Publishing* and *Presenting*. However, since the first conference—and in the ERPP literature more broadly—there has been little focus on the *Presenting* aspect

of this binary. Of course, it is not the fault of the organizers if few abstracts are submitted on the topic. Nevertheless, presenting is a crucial part of the research and publication process. Many published papers originate as conference presentations, yet presenting remains a significant challenge, often more so than other stages of publishing. Scholars may be more proficient in written than spoken English, and public speaking is emotionally demanding for most. I have personally heard many accounts of scholars struggling with the pressures of presenting at conferences, with some even abandoning academia altogether due to the distress it causes.

The paper I cited earlier (Amano et al, 2023) now provides some empirical evidence on this issue. One of Amano et al.'s findings was that language barriers significantly hinder "non-native English speakers" (their term) at conferences, particularly for early-career researchers. About 30% of the participants in their data avoid English-language conferences, and half avoid oral presentations due to language difficulties. "Non-native speakers" also spend much more time preparing presentations in English than "native speakers." Additionally, over 65% of early-career "non-native speakers" struggle to confidently explain their work in English.

This Volume

Having got those issues out of the way, I will now move on to the chapters in the present volume. While all of them are worthy of further commentary, I do not have space to do that. I will therefore single out three which particularly resonate with my personal interests as an ERPP scholar with long experience and wide interests.

My work in ERPP has been influenced by the genre theory of Swales (1990), with its notion of discourse community and Berkenkotter & Huckin (1995/2016), and their theory of genre as social action (Miller, 1984). In both of these theories, the novice researcher is seen as attempting to gain access to their target community of scholars. In Swales's model, the novice must strive towards membership of the target discourse community through acquisition of its shared goals, specific genres, specialized vocabulary, mechanisms for gatekeeping (e.g., peer review, feedback), and various communicative norms. Berkenkotter & Huckin's model of social action is illustrated in the case study of the novice scholar Nate, whose initial struggles and eventual adaptation show that genre learning is a process of socialization rather than just memorization of structural templates.

In both of these theories of genre acquisition, learning is considered to be situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where expertise is gained through active

participation in the community rather than through explicit instruction alone. In both of these approaches, there is also a metaphorical notion of space, of moving from one place to another, from a place of incompetence and exclusion to a place of proficiency and membership. In later work, Wallerstein's theory of centre-periphery, as applied by Canagarajah (1996), was also influential in my thinking (e.g., Flowerdew, 2000). Here, the notion of space becomes more material, although still remaining metaphorical—material insofar as centre and periphery are geographical spaces and metaphorical because centre and periphery also represent relations of power.

The reason I am recounting this background is because I think the chapter by Catalina Neculai in the present volume breaks new ground in terms of space and ERPP. Opening with a description of her spatial experience in the days prior to the PRISEAL conference and linking up with a historical site in Santa Cruz de Tenerife related to a fellow Romanian scholar, Neculai's elegantly written paper argues for an explicit spatial turn in ERPP studies. Posing the question "But what do we talk about when we talk, or don't talk, about space?", Neculai's paper argues for a more "nuanced, granular and dialectical spatial differentiations both in praxis and in theory" in the context of ERPP (she prefers the acronym WRPP).

Drawing on the work of Lefebvre (1974/1991 and other urban geographers) and his tripartite division of space into *l'espace perçu*—material, sensory, physical spatial practices; *l'espace conçu*—conceptions or representations of space; and *l'espace vécu*—lived, experienced and imagined spaces of representation/representational spaces, Neculai's paper disentangles and recontextualizes what she refers to as "the various spatialities at work in our practices and understandings of writing (re)production in the contemporary transnational academia" (This volume, chapter 3), culminating in five spatially conscious mappings which can serve as "significant starting points for researchers, editors, peer reviewers, research writing brokers, publishers, research administrators and policy makers to render their own practices spatially conscious." Her paper thus offers important insights for both theory and practice, taking us beyond those earlier (though still very relevant, I would argue) theories of Swales, Berkenkotter and Huckin, and Canagarajah, who influenced my earlier thinking.

Both Margaret Cargill and Yongyan Li have made major contributions to the promotion and development of ERPP in China (and more broadly). Yongyan, who is from Nanjing, was my PhD student at City University of Hong Kong, graduating in 2006. I introduced Yongyan to Margaret when Margaret was passing through Hong Kong on one of her visits to the Mainland from Australia, where, as reported in their chapter, she conducted

frequent ERPP courses at various universities, often with her ecologist colleague Patrick O'Connor. I like to think, therefore, that I played a role in Yongyan and Margaret's subsequent collaboration.

Like Neculai's chapter, Cargill and Li's contribution is at the macro level, but whereas Neculai's chapter is theoretical, Cargill and Li's is descriptive, providing a holistic overview survey of the provision of ERPP in one (very large) country, China, beginning in the 2000s. The conclusion to the chapter highlights both similarities to and differences from other comparable contexts, but some of the possibly unique features of the Chinese context are of particular interest to me. For example, the fact that China has over 2,700 regular higher education institutions and (in 2022) 556,100 PhD students. Or that ERPP-focussed MOOCs are available for free in China to anyone who registers and has a mobile phone. Or the plethora of Web-based ERPP-focussed talks and seminars that are freely available. Or that there is already an extensive range of web-based videos on how to use AI tools to quickly produce a research paper. All of these facts testify to the huge demand for ERPP in China and the innovative ways in which this demand is being met.

No one reading this collection will be surprised to find that Swales' 1990 book has had a powerful impact on ERPP in China (as it did on me, as noted above), but the fact that this one single book—introduced into China only in 2001—should have been so influential as described in this chapter is remarkable (I remember that this was the book that formed the basis for Yongyan's proposal when she applied to be a PhD student with me). Less surprising is the on-going divide between language teachers and content specialists in the teaching of ERPP in China, in spite of the tremendous efforts by Margaret Cargill and her ecologist colleague to encourage collaboration in their workshops presented over many years at various Chinese universities. The relative lack of degree courses for EAP/ERPP teachers won't be a surprise to many, I suspect, either.

I have always felt that Intercultural Rhetoric (IR)—previously referred to as Contrastive Rhetoric (CR)—has a lot to offer ERPP. Indeed, chapters on this topic made up one of the four sections in my edited collection, *Academic Discourse*, over twenty years ago (Flowerdew, 2002). The simple rationale for IR in ERPP is that in order to perform a genre in a foreign language and academic culture one needs to know how that genre differs from how it would be performed in one's own language. The requirement is particularly clear when one needs to present at an international conference or write a research article for an international (English language) journal. In its original manifestation as CR, the approach came in for criticism for its static, deterministic, and ethnocentric assumptions about language and writing.

In her reflective dialogue with Sally Burgess, Ana Moreno highlights how contrastive rhetoric (CR) evolved into intercultural rhetoric (IR). This shift emphasizes context, interaction, and genre expectations rather than the rigid cultural patterns traditionally associated with CR. Moreno also advocates moving beyond a focus on scholarly writing by "native" English speakers and embracing English as a lingua franca (ELF), a crucial issue for many plurilingual scholars. Given the international nature of research publication, the argument is that diverse varieties of English should be recognized and accepted, in contrast to the traditional view that standard British or American English should be the norm (Flowerdew, 2022). This perspective calls for a shift in IR research—from analysing "native" English research writing, as Moreno terms it, to examining how different varieties of English are (increasingly) used as a lingua franca in English-medium journals. While Rozycki and Johnson (2013) have explored this area, further empirical research is needed, I would argue.

Another interesting aspect of this chapter which resonates with me is Moreno's recommendation that research in IR and ELF may require a critical-pragmatic approach (CP) (Harwood & Hadley, 2004). This approach involves raising scholars' awareness of cross-cultural variations in academic writing, helping them understand the reasons behind these differences, and highlighting the potential impact of transferring features typical of their L1 writing to English for a global audience. This perspective can be traced back to Pennycook's (1997) debate with Allison (1996), where he critiqued Allison's argument for a pragmatic approach to EAP (referred to by Pennycook as "vulgar pragmatism") and argued for a more critical approach. In the context of ERPP, CP calls for balancing the need for non-Anglophone scholars to conform to dominant English-language academic norms (the pragmatic aspect) with a critical awareness of the socio-political implications of these norms (the critical aspect) (Corcoran & Englander, 2016; Flowerdew, 2007).

Whilst a worthy goal, in my experience, however, this represents a challenge, because, when I have attempted this approach in my own ERPP teaching, my novice scholar students (perhaps because they have been mostly from STEM disciplines) have been more interested in achieving publication and do not want to risk their chances by using "non-standard" English if "standard English" is the requirement of their target journals, which it still invariably is. Interestingly, my experience matches that of Sally Burgess, as reported in a co-authored article (Burgess, Martín, & Balasanyan, 2019). Nevertheless, as ERPP practitioners, we can still work on raising awareness of these issues, in my view, not only in the classroom with novice scholars, but also with EAP teachers, who most likely have no background in critical pedagogy, and with editors and reviewers, who similarly may be ignorant of

such sociolinguistic notions. As for Moreno's application of CP in IR, I think she is on firmer ground, because if scholars can see the actual cross-cultural variations in academic writing between their academic culture and the international one, they will have some precise features which they can consider for possible resistance to the international norms.

PRISEAL as a Field?

I should perhaps include in this short Coda a reference to my own presentation at PRISEAL 2023. In my paper, I responded to one of the suggested topics in the call for papers, "ERPP as a field", considering to what extent it could be considered as a field of study. I considered various criteria, according to a number of scholars, in particular whether ERPP had a canon of key texts to which both novice and experienced scholars might reference in order to define its scope and its key contributors.

I catalogued my list of suggested texts according to three domains: discourse analysis of research writing; ethnographic approaches to research writing; and pedagogy of research writing. Some texts I cited as possible candidates were Swales (1990), with his notion of genres as communicative events with a shared purpose, his introduction of the Create-a-Research-Space (CARS) model to describe how research articles are structured, his emphasis on the role of discourse communities in shaping genre conventions, and his notion of rhetorical consciousness-raising as a pedagogical approach. I also cited Canagarajah (1996), with his critique of the dominance of Western academic discourse not only in terms of linguistic proficiency but also as a result of material and institutional barriers—such as access to funding, libraries, and academic networks. My third potential key text was Lillis and Curry (2010), which examines the unequal power dynamics in global academic publishing, showing through ethnographic work how multilingual scholars navigate linguistic, institutional, and epistemic barriers through literacy brokers, networks, and strategic positioning to gain access to English-medium journals. A fourth key text I cited was Hyland (2004), who, through corpus analysis supported by interviews with scholars, demonstrated how academic writing is inherently social and interactive, shaped by disciplinary conventions, audience expectations, and rhetorical strategies that scholars use to negotiate identity, credibility, and engagement within their academic communities.

Prior to the conference, I emailed the participants and asked them for their own suggestions. Although the response was modest, there were nevertheless some interesting texts that I had not included in my list. One I had certainly overlooked, with hindsight, is Bennett (2014). This edited collection argues that

academic writing exists within a hierarchical global system, where Anglophone centres set the norms for scholarly communication, while non-Anglophone or "semiperipheral" regions (e.g., Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America) navigate tensions between local academic traditions and the pressures of English-medium publication. While scholars from these semiperipheral regions face structural disadvantages in accessing high-impact English-language journals due to linguistic, epistemic, and institutional barriers, they, at the same time, play a crucial role in mediating between local knowledge production and global academic discourse. This text forms an important bridge between the studies I cited earlier regarding situated learning and Neculai's further thoughts on ERPP spatialities in the present volume.

As to the broader question of ERPP as a potential field, given that the term field is often considered to be a synonym of discipline, we might consider the following criteria for a discipline, as set out by Krishnan (2009):

1. a particular object, or focus, for their research
2. a body of accumulated specialist knowledge specific to the discipline
3. theories that organise the specialist knowledge
4. specific terminologies
5. specific research methods
6. some institutional manifestation in the form of subjects taught at universities or colleges, respective academic departments and professional associations connected to it

I do not have space to consider these here. I will leave the reader to ponder on that. However, if I were to do so, I think my conclusion would be that ERPP is certainly not a fully-fledged discipline, but it probably has the makings of one. I say this because ERPP meets some of the criteria, but not all.

Finally, readers of this volume may wonder why there is no discussion of the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in ERPP in this collection (except by Cargill and Li). The reason is simple. The conference was held just over a year before the release of ChatGPT. Given the revolutionary affordances (and ethical issues) offered to academic writers and researchers by AI, this will doubtless be an important topic of the next PRISEAL conference in 2026.

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