

## Developing Academic English through Interaction

**Authors :** John Bankier

**Abstract :** Development of academic English occurs not only in communities of practice but also within wider social networks, referred to by Zappa-Hollman and Duff as individual networks of practice. Such networks may exist whether students are developing academic English in English-dominant contexts or in contexts in which English is not a majority language. As yet, little research has examined how newcomers to universities interact with a variety of social ties in such networks to receive academic and emotional support as they develop the academic English necessary to succeed in local and global academia. The one-year ethnographic study described in this presentation followed five Japanese university students enrolled on an academic English program in their home country. We graphically represent participants' individual networks of practice related to academic English and display the role of interaction in these networks to socialization. Specific examples of academic practices will be linked to specific instances of social interaction. Interaction supportive of the development of academic practices often occurred during unplanned interactions outside the classroom and among small groups of close friends who were connected to each other in more than one way, such as those taking multiple classes together. These interactions occurred in study spaces, in hallways between class periods, at lunchtimes, and online. However, constraints such as differing accommodation arrangements, class scheduling and the hierarchical levelling of English classes by test scores discouraged some participants both from forming strong ties related to English and from interacting with existing ties. The presentation will briefly describe ways in which teachers in all contexts can maximise interaction outside the classroom.

**Keywords :** academic, english, practice, network

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