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Foreword

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Foreword

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- 1 As ESP practitioners, we now receive a growing number of requests from colleague-researchers, specialists of other disciplines, to re-read and revise the texts they are submitting for publication.
- 2 What began on an informal basis within faculties has now taken on another dimension (Cooke: this volume). Indeed there are practical issues to be addressed: a new role for the ESP practitioner within the institution, the relationship with the author, the revision session itself in the presence of the researcher or the follow-up of modifications via e-mail exchanges. The creation of such revision services has also led to the need for research into the language of publication and many different areas are being explored.
- 3 The ESP practitioner requires knowledge of the process of publication, the constraints imposed by the discourse community, their expectations and how this will influence the form of the message. Studies have therefore examined the criteria of reviewers (Crosnier 1994) and how science is constructed according to social and economic parameters (Myers 1985). Studies of a more ethnographic nature give us an insight into laboratory life (Latour, Woolgar 1988) and how specific discourse communities function. An awareness of the researcher's composing processes is desirable. Cultural differences which may interfere with the clarity of the text can be highlighted by comparing NSE productions with NNSE writing (Fontaine, Busch-Lauer: this volume). The ESP practitioner must be able to sensitise the NNSE to the information structure of the genre, textual cohesion and typical lexico-grammatical realisations of rhetorical moves. Diachronic studies also enable us to trace the constantly evolving language of publication. Of all the genres, the research article has been the focus of many studies. This is quite understandable as this genre is the vector chosen by research teams to transmit their results, so their reputation and matters of funding or promotion depend on its publication. However, more recently other genres have been examined such as "letters to the editor" (Carnet & Magnet 2002).
- 4 Studies into the writing-up of research thus focus both on the written text as a product and on the writing process itself. After the identification of rhetorical functions and moves within a text, the phraseology of the moves can be explored (Gledhill 2000) and the

occurrence and usage of surface elements can be examined by corpus-driven linguistics (Williams et al: this volume). Such linguistic and discursive analysis enables us to deconstruct articles in order to allow the NNSE to reconstruct his article using the constitutive elements. Text revision and examination of drafts lead us to focus on the writing process. Problem areas can be highlighted by error analysis, and cases of textual incoherence or breakdown in communication can be reformulated.

- 5 This research has of course pedagogical applications. The ESP practitioner's genre knowledge can be used upstream in didactising authentic materials. There is more and more call for academic writing courses for PhD students in our universities. Furthermore, tools can be created to assist researchers in the drafting of articles (Fontaine: this volume).
- 6 Times are changing though and the world of publication is evolving (Cooke: this volume). The need and desire to communicate results as quickly as possible, making use of new technologies, means there is little time for peer review and copy editing. Editors may not be looking for perfection and so our priorities may change in the advice we give our colleagues. Many journals now publish articles directly online, the print version becoming available weeks or even months later. The electronic version is often the complete or "long" version and the paper version may be abridged, or in some cases only the abstract will be printed. There are implications here for the NNSE researcher and the ESP practitioner. In a recent article in the *British Medical Journal*, the deputy editor, Tony Delamothe, admits that "science advances on the basis of the accumulation of 'good enough' studies written up to a 'good enough' standard." He claims that peer-reviewed papers may become the archival record and not the "active" literature. With peer review and editing being side-stepped to speed up access to papers, some publishers' only requirement becomes "acceptable English". Our aim in the revision process may therefore legitimately be to help NNS researchers attain the threshold of acceptability.
- 7 This set of articles therefore raises a number of burning issues whose full context is developed by Claude Sionis in his introduction to the theme.

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