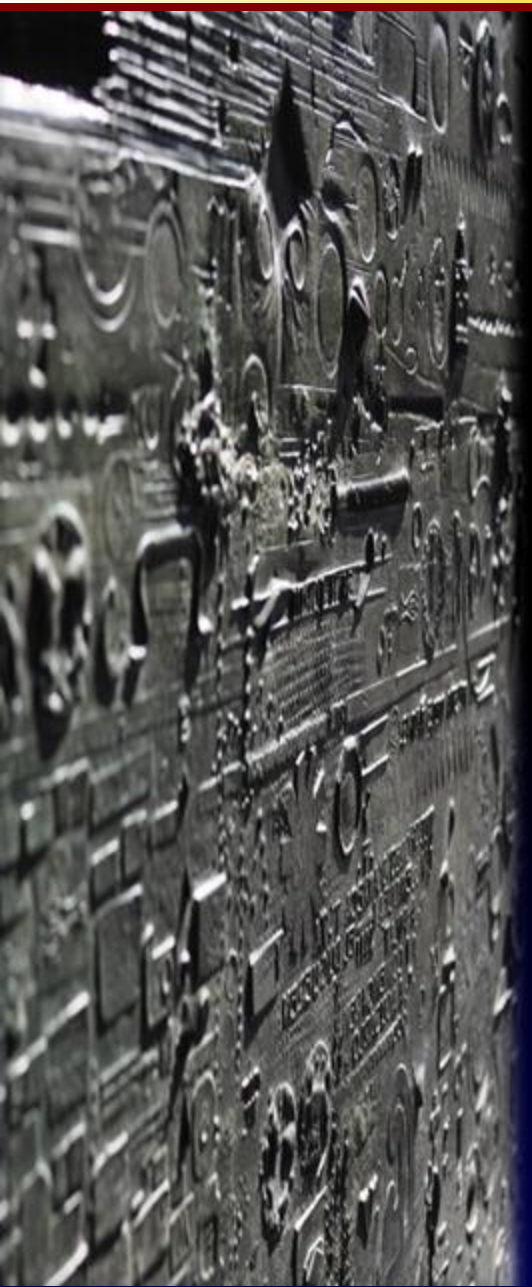

Making Your Argument Compelling: Strategies for Getting Published

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What makes a study publishable?

What makes a study publishable?

Situated

Current

Newsworthy

Topic Identification Process

- Reading for
  - Content
  - Dissonance
  - Theoretical framework
  - Methods
  - Alternative explanations
- Call for papers
- Reflections
- Observations
- Identifying a gap

It is not enough to show that something has not been studied; you must also be able to explain why it needs to be studied and why it needs to be studied now.

Finding a topic by looking to the Past, Present and Future

Past: Resurrecting a topic

Make a case: Why this topic? Why now?

- Prematurely dismissed or abandoned
- New theoretical framework
- New methodological approach
- New context, new population

Present: Addressing a Current Issue

- Identify a gap
  - Continue an existing research thread
  - Challenge the conventional wisdom
  - Raise a question about existing research
- Generate new insights
  - Respond to existing research
  - Reinterpret previous studies
  - Synthesize existing research

Future: Introducing a new topic/method

Why didn't I think of that?

- Theorize: Identify a problem that has not been studied
- Introduce a theory from other fields
- Apply or invent a new method
- Use a new technology

Topic Selection Guidelines

Choose a topic :

- with which you have some personal experience and in which you have some personal investment
- for which there is a discourse community
- that is open to inquiry
- that involves some “genuine questions,” “dissonance” or “puzzlement”
- that you are willing to examine critically
- that is feasible.

Exemplars:
Some game-changing contributions

Language Learning 46:2, June 1996, pp. 327–369

Review Article
The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes

John Truscott
National Tsing Hua University

The paper argues that grammar correction in L2 writing classes should be abandoned, for the following reasons: (a) Substantial research shows it to be ineffective and none shows it to be helpful in any interesting sense; (b) for both theoretical and practical reasons, one can expect it to be ineffective; and (c) it has harmful effects. I also consider and reject a number of arguments previously offered in favor of grammar correction.

JOURNAL OF SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING, 9 (3), 227 – 257 (2000)

Patterns of Teacher Response to Student Writing in a Multiple-Draft Composition Classroom: Is Content Feedback Followed by Form Feedback the Best Method?

TIM ASHWELL

Komazawa Junior College, Tokyo, Japan

In this study, four different patterns of teacher feedback were given to foreign language students producing a first draft (D1), a second draft (D2), and a final version (D3) of a single composition. The pattern usually recommended within a process writing approach of content-focussed feedback on D1 followed by form-focussed feedback on D2 was compared with the reverse pattern, another pattern in which form and content feedback were mixed at both stages, and a control pattern of zero feedback.

ELSEVIER

Journal of Second Language Writing 18 (2009) 30–43

JOURNAL OF SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING

To give is better than to receive: The benefits of peer review to the reviewer's own writing

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Abstract

Although peer review has been shown to be beneficial in many writing classrooms, the benefits of peer review to the reviewer, or the student giving feedback, has not been thoroughly investigated in second-language writing research. The purpose of this study is to determine which is more beneficial to improving student writing: giving or receiving peer feedback. The study was conducted at an intensive English institute with ninety-one students in nine writing classes at two proficiency levels. The "givers" reviewed anonymous papers but received no peer feedback over the course of the semester, while the "receivers" received feedback but did not review other students' writing. An analysis in the gains in writing ability measured from writing samples collected at the beginning and end of the semester indicated that the givers, who focused solely on reviewing peers' writing, made more significant gains in their own writing over the course of the semester than did the receivers, who focused solely on how to use peer feedback. Results also indicated that givers at the lower proficiency level made more gains than those at higher proficiency levels and that slightly more gains were observed on global than local aspects of writing.

Keywords: Second-language writing; Peer review; Peer editing; Peer feedback

A few examples from
my own backyard

Paul Kei Matsuda

Composition Studies and ESL Writing: A Disciplinary Division of Labor

Specialization leads to its own problems. The discipline or department can become an end in itself.

—Joel Colton (317)

Although the number of nonnative speakers of English in U.S. institutions of higher education has been increasing continuously during the last four decades, the development of composition studies does not seem to reflect this trend.[1] Until fairly recently, discussions of English as a Second Language (ESL) issues in composition studies have been few and far between. Few composition theorists include second-language perspectives in their discussions, and only a handful of empirical studies written and read by composition specialists consider second-language writers in their research design, interpretation of data and discussion of implications. It almost seems as though the presence of over 457,000 international students in colleges and universities across the nation (Davis 2) does not concern writing teachers and scholars.[2]

The presence of ESL students should be an important consideration for all teachers and scholars of writing because ESL students can be found in many writing courses across the United States. As Jessica Williams' survey of ESL writing program administration suggests, the vast majority of institutions continue to require undergraduate ESL students to enroll in first-year composition courses, often in addition to special ESL writing courses.

Paul Kei Matsuda is a doctoral candidate in the Rhetoric and Composition program at Purdue University, where he specializes in second-language writing. He teaches the graduate practicum in teaching ESL writing as well as undergraduate and graduate writing courses for both native and nonnative speakers of English. This essay is part of a larger historical study of second-language writing in US higher education.

On the origin of contrastive rhetoric: a response to H.G. Ying

Paul Kei Matsuda
University of New Hampshire

Robert B. Kaplan's 1966 article, "Cultural thought patterns in inter-cultural education" is, without a doubt, one of the most widely known and criticized articles in the history of applied linguistics. Yet, relatively few attempts have been made to consider this document in its own historical context. For that reason, I was happy to see H.G. Ying's serious attempt to re-examine the intellectual traditions that contributed to this important historical document. In "The origin of contrastive rhetoric revisited", Ying (2000) raises "the question of whether contrastive rhetoric originated from the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis" (p. 260). He maintains it did not, arguing that Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric is "incompatible" with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis or its German predecessors (p. 260). He then concludes that "at least several threads of thought may have influenced Kaplan's view on contrastive rhetoric" (p. 266).

Ying is right in pointing out that Kaplan's view of the relationship between language and culture is "not the same as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity" (p. 262), although, as I will explain, I would not go so far as to say they are "incompatible". I also agree that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was not the only source of influence. A careful reading of Kaplan (1966) would reveal that there were several intellectual traditions that contributed to the development of what has come to be known as contrastive rhetoric. However, the alternative explanation on the origin of contrastive rhetoric Ying proposes is questionable not only because it is highly speculative but also because it overlooks a number of available sources of evidence. In this response, I address two main concerns. First, I consider Ying's claim that Kaplan's view of the relationship between culture and rhetoric is incompatible with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. I then examine Ying's speculations about the major influences on Kaplan's 1966 article.


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JOURNAL OF SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING

Voice in Japanese written discourse Implications for second language writing

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Abstract

While the study of written discourse that informs the field of L2 writing has generated many insights into its generalizable features, individual variations have largely been neglected. This article explores the possibilities for the study of divergent aspects of discursive practices by focusing on the notion of voice and considers the implications for L2 writing research and instruction. I begin by examining recent critiques of the notion of voice that emphasize its strong association with the ideology of individualism and argue that the notion of voice is not exclusively tied to individualism. To demonstrate that the practice of constructing voice is not entirely foreign to so-called "collectivist cultures," I present evidence of voice in Japanese electronic discourse, focusing on how voice is constructed through the use of language-specific discursive features. Based on this analysis, I argue that the difficulties that Japanese students face in constructing voice in English written discourse are due not to its incompatibility with their cultural orientation but to the different ways in which voice is constructed in Japanese and English as well as the lack of familiarity with the strategies available in English.

Keywords: Voice; Identity; Web diary; Electronic discourse; Linguistic individual

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Voice in academic writing: The rhetorical construction of author identity in blind manuscript review

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Abstract

Some researchers have argued that voice is irrelevant to academic writing and that the importance of voice has been overstated in the professional literature [Helms-Park, R., & Stapleton, P. (2003); Stapleton, P. (2002). To investigate whether and how a socially oriented notion of *voice*—defined as "the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoires" [Matsuda, P.K. (2001)—plays a role in academic writing, this study examined the construction of an author's discursive identity by peer reviewers in a simulated blind manuscript review process for an academic journal in the field of rhetoric and composition. The analysis of the written reviews as well as interviews with the two reviewers and the manuscript author indicated that the reviewers' constructions of the author's voice are related to their stance toward the author. The findings suggest that voice does play a role in academic writing and that there is a need for further research into the issue of identity construction from the perspectives of both writers and readers.

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The Construction of Author Voice by Editorial Board Members

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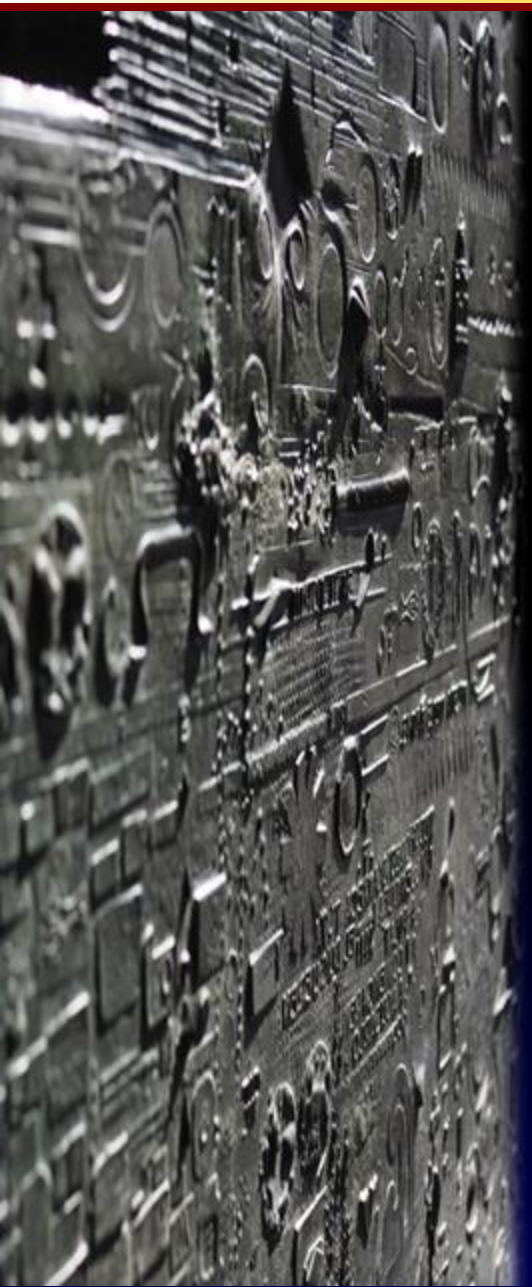
Paul Kei Matsuda
Arizona State University, Tempe

Studies of blind manuscript review have illustrated that readers often form impressions of or speculate about unknown authors' identities in the manuscript review task. In this article, the authors extend that work by examining the discursive and nondiscursive features that play a role in readers' active construction of author voice. Through a survey completed by 70 editorial board members of six journals in applied linguistics and rhetoric and composition, the authors identify quantitative and qualitative trends in reviewers' practices regarding voice construction. Findings indicate that many readers do build impressions of an author's identity when reviewing anonymous manuscripts and that the rhetorical nature of the review task may lead readers to attend more to some discursive features than to others.

Keywords: *voice; identity; blind review; writing for publication*

Questions?



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Manuscript Check List

Does the introduction/lit review…

- Identify a significant research problem?
- Situate the project in relevant literature?
- Acknowledge relevant previous work?
- Identify research gaps?
- Make it seem that the current study is a next logical step?

Does the method section…

- Identify relevant research questions that are situated in the current conversation?
- Describe the context for the research?
- Describe the participants and other sources of data?
- Describe the recruitment and data collection procedure?
- Describe the data analysis procedure?
- Acknowledge any methodological limitations?

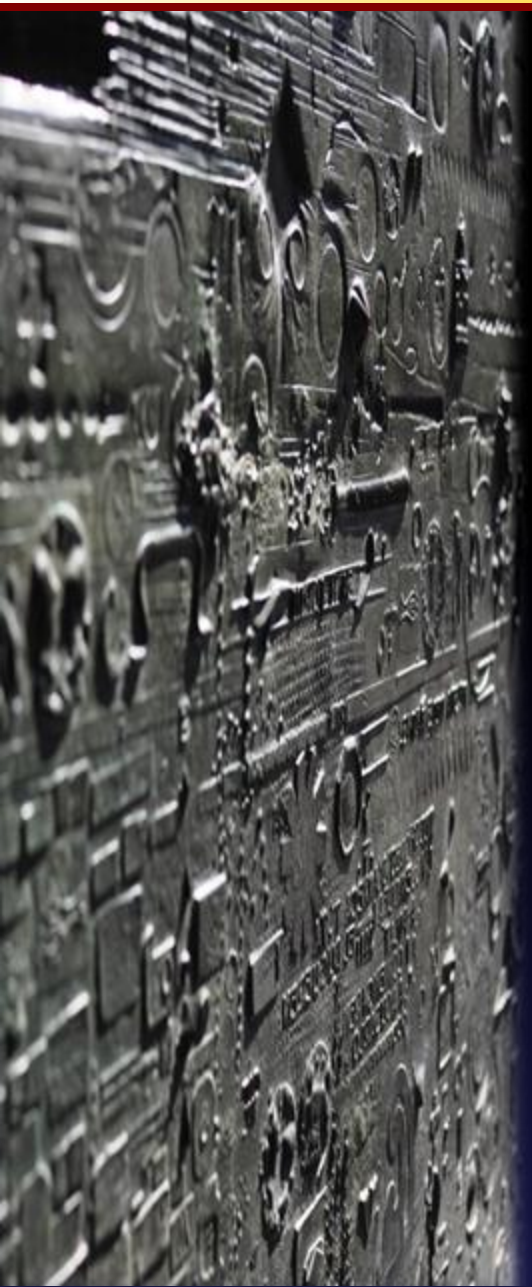
Does the results section…

- Describe the overall findings?
- Answer the research questions?
- Describe data and analysis?

Does the discussion/conclusion section…

- Summarize the findings?
- Explain alternative interpretations?
- Acknowledge limitations?
- Discuss implications for theory?
- Suggest future research directions?
- Discuss applications to teaching?
- Relate back to the research problem?

Questions?



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