



# Introduction: Research Capacity Building through Academic Networks and Mentoring<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In this introductory chapter, we discuss the value of academic networking and highlight the benefits for junior scientists within the sponsorship schemes of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. In the context of fewer and often higher unsuccessful applications for the Humboldt scholarships schemes from Africa (Cameroon and Nigeria, for example), we show that the work of The African Centre for Academic Writing Excellence can make a positive contribution. The concepts that underlie the work of the Centre are network and community of practice, this is why we sketch their development and applications to cooperation between “North” and “South”. The overview of the chapters in this book shows the current state of discussion on academic writing and illustrates the multiplicity of styles encountered in this network – as a basis for comparison with others.

Keywords: academic network, community of practice, research capacity building, junior scientists, academic writing, Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation

## 1. Academic writing, networks and reciprocity

Our conception of this academic network is largely influenced by ideas from social capital and exchange theories (cf. Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Willer & Skvoretz 1997). Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (cf. Bourdieu 1985, 1990). These networks provide access to social capital by creating routes in which resources (e.g. books, expertise, feedback on research, publication opportunities, workshops and conferences) flow. Network members, or *nodes*, may activate these routes — also called *ties* (connections, relationships) — within and between institutions for particular purposes, according to what they can contribute and what resources they seek (cf. Polodny & Page 1998). From a social exchange perspective, individuals expect to deploy this social capital and reap returns from their “investment” in the form of opportunities from which they can “profit”. For instance, Katz et al. (2004) argue that the return on individual’s investment accrues from their ability to “broker” the flow of knowledge and information between network members. Studies have indicated that collaboration via academic mobility helps gain knowledge and skills, as well as methods and

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equipment that the partners can provide (Melin 2000). Although there is often unequal power relation among network members, fundamentally, networks operate on the basis of exchange and reciprocity (Plickert et al. 2007). It is this exchange and reciprocity that this present programme intends to cultivate among junior and senior scientists in the University of Yaoundé 1 and TU Chemnitz, with the long-term goal of increasing participation of Cameroonian scientists in the sponsorship opportunities that the Humboldt Foundation offers.

## 2. The African Centre for Academic Writing Excellence<sup>2</sup>

Academic networking is an important factor in the development of (junior) scientists. One of the goals of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is to strengthen regional and professional networking between alumni and stimulate junior scientists' interest in its post-doctoral research programmes (AvH 2008). Recently, the Foundation announced additional funding to increase the number of scholarship awards per year for all its programmes, notably the Georg Forster Award, which specifically targets young academics from developing countries (Newsletter 3/2013). This measure demonstrates the commitment of the Foundation to get more junior scientists from these regions to benefit from its scholarship offers, expand the frontiers of knowledge and contribute to the development of their home countries through teaching, research, and innovation. Despite this wide ranging opportunity, the number of successful applications in the Humanities (e.g. languages & literatures, history, law, philosophy, and performing & visual arts) coming from Sub-Saharan Africa over the years have at no time exceeded 5 % of the global total. Yet Humanities studies constitute the bulk of students in most universities in the region. However, while application statistics for the Humboldt scholarship from this region have always been low (around 4-5 %), those in subjects such as linguistics and literatures have surprisingly been encouraging. For example, there were 232 applications in the Humanities (social science inclusive) between 1993-2012 for Cameroon and Nigeria, and 90 of the applications were successful (38.8%). The figures for linguistics and literatures in this sum stood at 78 (34 %) with 41 (44%) successful. What this trend indicates is that although the numbers of junior scientists in the Humanities who submit applications for the Humboldt scholarship are relatively low, there is a greater chance to have successful applications in certain subject areas if many apply. This sense of optimism has been one of the reasons behind the creation of the African-German Centre for Academic Writing Excellence (AfriG-CAWE) at the University of Yaoundé I. This was part of the activities of the Humboldt Alumni Prize Award that Professor Daniel Nkemleke received in 2014; but at the same time, it honoured fruitful research cooperation between Chemnitz and Yaoundé. The centre links academics from five African countries (Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, and Kenya) and TU Chemnitz, and aims to provide a platform

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.academicwriting-network4africa.org>



for constant interaction between junior scientists and their mentors in the form of feedback on their text, information on conferences and publication outlets etc.

The second reason for establishing the centre was advocacy — provision of information on the Humboldt scholarship programmes in Germany. Over the years, it was realized that general information on the Humboldt scholarship opportunities was often not widely available to junior scientists in universities in ways that they relate to it personally. The work of regional Humboldt associations and other networks in universities, though significant, is often too centralized and ad hoc; such that information may not always get to most junior scientists who work in the same region/institution. Third, to a certain extent, junior scientists in the region often lack the skills and expertise necessary to write successful projects. Our own experience in working with graduate students on project writing has taught us that the least common things we assume people know may turn out to be the most difficult. Writing a convincing and winnable project is often not an easy task. Consequently, any alumni network that strikes a neat balance between mobilizing junior scientists, and mentoring them in project writing stands a good chance to achieve desirable results. Further, the standards required for publication in English-medium journals are not easy, either. The literature on academic writing in non-native settings show that for (junior) scientists with limited academic resources, meeting the range of demands for international publication may be challenging (cf. Lillis & Curry 2010: 61).

This background set the stage for the organization of an international symposium on academic writing and mentorship for junior scientists in 2015 in Yaoundé under the theme: *Academic Writing across Disciplines in Africa: socializing junior scientists in the discourses of research, and maximizing their changes for successful Humboldt Applications*. This event brought together more than 40 participants from partner countries—students and experts—who presented papers and/or discuss projects. This volume records some of the presentations at that symposium, supplemented by specially commissioned contributions to experienced research partners in the field. Other presentations not published here are in gestation, and look set to be available as PhD theses, research articles or projects for the Humboldt applications. We see the symposium event as an important milestone in the broader Chemnitz-Africa academic relations, a link that has so far produced significant results with the primary support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, including the DAAD and KAAD funding bodies. For example, from the African side three Humboldt scholars from Cameroon and Nigeria have researched in Chemnitz, eight PhD students (DAAD/KAAD) from Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania have completed their theses in Chemnitz. Further, Chemnitz has hosted many DAAD senior scholars from Cameroon and Nigeria for short term research stays over the years. On the German side, one senior scientist has been hosted by the University of Yaoundé I under the Humboldt return fellowship scheme; one PhD student and several MA students have spent extended periods of time collecting data for research in Cameroon.



Thus, the long and fruitful correlation between Chemnitz and Yaoundé has been intensified over the last few years and it is the first summary of the cooperation.

### 3. Key concepts of networks

The academic basis for this volume can be seen in the two concepts of networks and community of practice. In sociolinguistics, the idea of networks has been exploited profitably since Milroy's ground-breaking study in Northern Ireland (Milroy 1978). The academic networks in Africa are quite complex and not always fruitful. As indicated a long time ago, the tradition of sharing academic knowledge is not always well-maintained in African scholarly circles (Schmied 1991). In the varied and difficult circumstances of scholarship at African universities, the possession of resources like books and computers and links to "Northern" scholars are seen as an advantage that is a treasure for international academic success. Interestingly enough, as in many sociolinguistic studies, the weak ties, researchers that are not central to one network but have links to different networks, are sometimes more influential or innovative than the strong ties, if we see the hierarchy of scholars at African universities. The strength of ties obviously depends on the multiplicity and type of research interactions. A comparative study of (electronic) research connections of African and European researchers might shed an interesting light on network activities, in which different social (age, gender, country/region, university type and discipline) and textual variables (cf. network genres below) would have to be considered.

The concept of community of practice has made a great carrier, since it was introduced by Wenger 20 years ago in the context of knowledge and social learning (cf. Wenger 1998, but also Willer/Skvoretz 1998). It was expanded to a processes of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour (e.g. in management, as in Wenger/McDermott/Snyder 2002), which we need for our argumentation on academic writing here. The current state of discussion can be seen in E. & B. Wenger-Trayner (2015). They deconstruct some myths about communities of practice: that they are always self-organising - not necessarily, but "most communities need some cultivation to be sure that members get high value for their time", that their role is to share existing knowledge, but they also "invent new practices, create new knowledge, define new territory, and develop a collective and strategic voice" and that "a technology is best for communities of practice", but "A tool or technology is as good as it is useful to the people who use it" (ibid: 6f) – all this seems to be particularly important for African scholars today. E. & B. Wenger-Trayner even emphasise "There is increasing recognition that the challenge of developing nations is as much a knowledge as a financial challenge" (ibid: 5). They consider three characteristics as crucial for a community of practice (ibid: 2): domain (including commitment and competence), community (with joint activities, discussions and information sharing), and practice (with joint experiences, stories, tools, etc.). For African linguists interested in knowledge

dissemination in academic writing in the widest sense, this includes the following community activities:

- writing emails for various purposes (not only to request information or help, but to share in general),
- inviting colleagues to guest lectures, symposia, and conferences,
- establishing national competitions and review standards in professional associations,
- discussing and applying for (joint) research projects, and
- following colleagues in the subdisciplines in social media (like academia.edu).

These community activities have to be intensified to establish mutual trust and collaboration for the development of applied linguistics in the broadest sense in African nations.

The application of the conceptual communities of practice to academic writing is particularly useful, because it can be fruitfully applied to many publications on academic writing (e.g. Hyland 2012). The basic idea that the conventions of academic writing have to be agreed on by the practitioners themselves is generally accepted, although the complex network of publishers, contributors, and readers has changed enormously over the past ten years. Thus, the global view of genre structures like Swales' CARS (Nkemleke 2016) and the discussion of international conventions at national level by non-native speakers and writers of English (Schmied 2016) is particularly important today. The free accessibility of information on the world-wide web, in particular in portraits like Research Gate and academia.edu (Schmied *fc.*) has offered new chances for "Southern scholars" since Northerners can provide at least pre-published versions to their partners. Such digital humanities approaches may help to close the digital divide between North and South in the long run. The increased connectivity in Africa and the availability of secure internet and cloud options should make the open exchange and discussion of standards possible technically – and this should be the basis for the open exchange for the benefit of all. This should include explicit and transparent standards in different academic genres, from the internal qualifications of BA, MA and PhD theses to on-line academic journals, and project proposals and funding applications. Africa must be part of academic discourse on the tightening standards in all these academic genres to be able to participate effectively and successfully in international exchange and collaboration. In this development, Centres like the African Centre for Academic Writing Excellence in Yaoundé can make an important contribution through physical and virtual cooperation, i.e. through workshops and conferences as well as through guidance via web portals and other book publications like the present volume.

#### **4. Overview of contributions**

In the context of a focused attention on academic writing and the role it plays in advancing scholarship and empowering young academics, this present volume brings together students' and experts' text for two pedagogic reasons. First, the



expert texts highlight some relevant issues of concern for any successful research paper, which junior scientists can learn. Second, junior scientists' texts bring to the forefront aspects of their on-going research, which experts-as-mentors should be conversant with, as they engage with them. Indeed, the contributions are varied, highlighting the various contexts from which they originated. Some papers examined empirical data of near-experts/non-experts writers, others focus rather on broader issues of academic writing, yet others are mainly theoretical and case studies. Irrespective of orientation, the chapters contribute to orientate our reflection on what we can do within our Alumni network to accompany (junior) scientists in the often complex trajectory of text conception, writing, revising and publication.

The first set of chapters address issues of academic writing for students and advanced writers in non-native settings. **Josef Schmied** discusses how young scholars can use metalanguage to position themselves as researchers between disciplinary conventions and individual identities in their theses and project applications. He gives many examples how they can increase their professional credibility and even argues that comparative empirical studies may help to establish new functional standards of academic writing that may even contradict the old native-speaker conventions. In the following chapter, **Daniel Nkemleke** analyses the structure of research articles to uncover how advanced writers write in this genre, and to ascertain the degree of convergence to and/or divergence from the CARS Model. The Model remains a dependable format for structuring research introductions and the task of writing introductions to research papers requires ability to integrate a range of skills, which may be gained through reading and writing in the discipline. **Samuel Atechi** and **Jacinta Edusei** take on the problem of hedging in students' writing in Cameroon and Ghana respectively. While Samuel's chapter is a socio-pragmatic investigation that looks at gender differences in the use of hedges and boosters among postgraduate learners of English in Cameroon, Jacinta focuses on the degree to which Ghanaian students differ in their use of certain forms of hedging, namely epistemic evidential and judgement verbs vis-à-vis native speakers. **Camilla Arundie** examines cohesion in students' research proposals in the University of Maroua, and discusses how some of the cohesive devices are problematic for her students. At a more macro-level, **Comfort Ojongnpot** analyses the trouble spots in the end-of-course-long essays written by undergraduate students in the University of Buea. On their part, **Alexandria Esimaje / Susan Hunston** report on tense usage by university students in Nigeria, comparing results with data from native speakers. This chapter is a reminder that tense remains a learning need even for advanced writers in the university. The chapter by **Dunlop Ochieng / Jessica Dheskali** is an account of how the internet can be a useful source of information for students from the North and the South. It describes how the internet may provide the young academic writers with online dictionaries, style guides, software, online spelling and grammar checkers etc—resources that can make a difference in the quality of a scholarly production for an ESL writer.



The second set of chapters concentrates on language description in a Cameroonian /West African context. In the first chapter, **Augustin Simo Bobda** uses data from West African (including Cameroon) Englishes to illustrate how L<sub>n</sub> learners of English worldwide follow similar routes in their attempt to reach the English pronunciation, which they consider acceptable. The language that results from their learning strategies is always simpler than the orthodox and conservative prescriptions. The second chapter by **Bonaventure Sala** is an attempt to provide an account of ellipsis and anaphors in Cameroon spoken English. In this chapter, some marked distinctive properties of Cameroon English ellipsis are highlighted, including the possibility of inherent ellipsis with exophoric recovery from a wider context, the discursal and syntactic functions they play and the difference in genre of use. This is followed by **Napoleon Epoge's** analysis of the syntax of non-focalized *Wh*-question in Cameroon spoken English. This chapter focuses on the way non-focalized *wh*-questions are constructed in Cameroon English, as distinct from British English. In both these chapters, Bonaventure and Napoleon attempt to highlight subtle influences of the linguistic ecology of the Cameroonian environment in the way ellipsis and non-focalized *Wh*-questions are realized in spoken discourse. The next two papers in this series analyse aspects of the semantics and/or pragmatics of language use in Cameroon. While **Mohamadou Moubarak** uses the theory of Natural Semantics Metalanguage to offer some perspectives on the Cameroonian/African notion of time and punctuality, drawing parallel from data obtained from American Peace Corps Volunteers, **Lozzi Martial Meutem** uses Halliday's functional grammar theory to account for how language is used by certain groups of persons in restricted contexts to hide meaning that might otherwise be perceived as inappropriate.

Next in line are two chapters by **Justina Njika** and **Valentine Ubanako**. The former describes the language performance of two groups of postgraduate students in a teacher training institution, namely Anglophones and Francophones, and shows how the latter tend to do better in writing and grammar because they can transfer experiences from their study of another language—French. The latter is an overview of the demand and supply of English language in Cameroon. It draws statistics from enrolment in private language teaching and learning centers in the city of Yaoundé, to investigate why so many people are willing to study English and the potential that such an influx offers for the Cameroonian language services business.

**Layi Butake**, **Pani Nolowa Fominyen** and **Humphrey Ngala** bring to the volume non-linguistic contributions—a truly interdisciplinary perspective that is emphasized in this project. Their different chapters offer us the possibility to see academic writing as a common set of conventions that cut across different subjects. Layi writes on the language (image signifiers) of contemporary Anglophone Cameroon cinema, the message, as well as the mediums of dissemination of this cinema, underscoring the correlation between mediums of dissemination and audience response to the video films, and Pani examines the influence of Nollywood on Anglophone video films and the issue of representation therein. The last but not the least chapter by **Humphrey** discusses the geography of health in



Africa in the context of increase air traffic in the last several years. The paradox that Africa's share of disease in international health is higher than her involvement in international commercial travel is put as a challenge for Africa to improve its health care systems.

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# Academic Writing World-Wide: Comparing Metadiscourse Conventions, Credibility, and New Functional Standards?<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This chapter discusses key concepts of academic writing, especially metadiscourse, credibility, and functional standards. It discusses them in theoretical terms, but it also offers practical advice in the two genres, BA/MA/PhD theses and project proposals, which are crucial for young scholars' success in the research community today. It uses examples from comparable corpora from Africa, Europe and China to illustrate writing issues. It compares empirically usage and norm conventions and argues that discrepancies may not be due to mother-tongue interference exclusively, but due to English system problems; they can thus be discussed as possible acceptable deviations in the norm-developing process of non-native academic English, an advanced variety of *lingua franca* English.

Keywords: comparative student writing, comparable corpora, metadiscourse, argumentative patterns, style conventions, credibility, functional standards, conjuncts

## 1. Introduction

In the context of international networking for academic cooperation, especially between African and European scholars, writing conventions play a decisive role, for establishing contact, for funding applications and for publishing proposals, to name just a few types of cooperation that have become an essential part of international digital communication over the past 20 years. The globalisation of academic cooperation and the further spread of English as a *lingua franca* have also lead to a discussion of conventions and their differences between various academic cultures and between native and non-native speakers. From a constructivist perspective, it has been pointed out that there are no “native speakers” of academic writing and conventions can be negotiated to some extent by individual writers seeking to construct their academic identity in their disciplinary contexts (Hyland 2012). For young scholars from Africa, this raises fundamental issues, which have not been adequately addressed in teaching and research.

This chapter therefore explores three key concepts in international empirical comparison, metalanguage, genre-specific argumentation structure, and functional standards. My main argumentation is that the way to professional academic writing

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is similarly difficult for non-native writers from Europe, China and Africa, and a comparative view may help all writers in their respective communities to develop their specific writing skills more easily, possibly also in contrast to traditional native conventions. All three key concepts are related to rhetorical consciousness raising in a new sense. The writers' pragmatic consideration when constructing texts for the specific discourse community in their disciplinary genres is particularly important for non-native users of English.

In the practical sections, this article discusses similar issues as the practical handbooks by Siepmann et al. (2011: 3), which "is geared specifically towards the needs of German-speaking readers", and by Swales/Feak (2012), which is widely used internationally. In its consistent "from – to" sections, this article tries to help young academic writers to move confidently and successfully from their own individual experience to an awareness of their academic community's conventions either in independent studies or as an initial input in graduate tuitions. My approach is generally functional in three senses: First, I try to give examples of practical guidelines and strategies that will help writers to produce a more effective academic text; second, I try to explain the functions that govern conventions and question them when these functions are not obvious; and third, like most similar text books, I use a functional grammar (like Halliday) as a theoretical basis without taking this theoretical basis for granted.

## 2. From individual to community-specific metadiscourse

### 2.1. Metadiscourse definitions

Young researchers often assume that they just have to report "objectively" the "facts", but tend to forget that other researchers can only read these "facts" properly, when they are written in their proper context. This does not only imply all the technical terms that young scholars have been told to master in their respective theoretical contexts, but also what is traditionally often seen as "subjective" elements. Of course, in the history of rhetoric and argumentation theory the contrast between *ad rem* and *ad hominem* (i.e. focus on the object or the recipient of scientific discourse) has been discussed and in practical classes, simple guidelines (like to replace "subjective" *I* by passive constructions) have been given for a long time. The strong focus on the writer - reader relationship is relatively new, however, so that formal exclusion of the scientist seems to be replaced by open and explicit inclusion of the scientific writers in their texts. Hyland (2015: 303) even says "authors are everywhere in their texts, presenting stance towards their topics and readers". This is today often called metalanguage or metadiscourse; both terms suggest literally "beyond" the mere content or proposition, focussing on the pragmatic and communicative contexts. The difference between the two terms is small, except that metalanguage is more used in programming and philosophy, whereas metadiscourse rightly emphasises the pragmatic writer-reader relationship, which is particularly important in our context.

Interestingly, the term metadiscourse does not feature prominently in the practical handbooks by Siepmann et al. (2011) and Swales/Feak (2012). The latter provide at least three references with the useful definition and somewhat play down its importance (ibid: 147):

sentences or phrases that help readers make their way through the text by revealing such things as organization, referring readers to relevant parts of a text, or establishing logical connections. Metadiscourse is a noticeable feature of academic writing, although its value and frequency of use varies from one writing culture to another.

This definition does not only restrict metadiscourse in cultural terms, it also neglects the “subjective” or rhetorical elements. Hyland (2007) rightly emphasises the interaction in his subtitle *Metadiscourse. Exploring Interaction in Writing*. Since then, his systematic case studies have found many followers, who contributed little to the concept and more to the comparisons world-wide. Kawase (2015: 115), for instance, discusses a number of definitions and summarises carefully in Halliday’s theoretical context: “It appears that the majority of metadiscourse theorists [...] have adopted the notion that metadiscourse does not serve an ideational function (i.e., to construct propositional content) but textual and interpersonal functions”. This is confusing to beginners, since they do not consider non-propositional elements important and writer-reader interaction not objective.

For us, metadiscourse comprises all expressions that organize the content and convey the author’s beliefs and attitudes towards it. Researchers do not simply discuss facts or ideas, they also wrap up their content in metadiscourse, i.e. seek to claim solidarity with their readers, evaluate previous research and their own analyses, acknowledge alternative views, etc. As Hyland (2012: 206) wrote:

Raising student’s awareness of the language options available to them in negotiating an identity they feel comfortable with is also important in EAP classes. Once again, teachers can use corpus evidence to help students move beyond the conservative prescriptions of textbooks and style guides and into the preferred patterns of expression of their disciplines. An orientation to instruction based on access to choice through genre teaching and consciousness-raising can help students understand how writing conventions are enabling rather than deterministic. It can reveal the ways that typical patterns provide broad parameters of choice through which they can craft a distinctive self.

## 2.2. Argumentative structure

For over 20 years, Swales has developed his genre-approach, which lead to the widely-used textbook *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (Swales/Feak 2012). This “is conceived as providing assistance with writing part-genres (problem-solutions, methods, and discussions) and genres (book reviews and research papers)” (ibid: viii). In this chapter, I focus on the genres theses and project applications, which are particularly important for young scholars from Africa (and beyond). Whereas applications function as scientific offers, hopefully convincing plans to carry out a project in a specific frame (time. budget), theses are the conventionalised reports that are to demonstrate that the candidate is worthy

of being admitted to the next level of academic qualification, from BA to MA to PhD to full researcher, who knows their field and the core genres research articles, text books, handbooks, etc. Theses and project applications are less often discussed in terms of Swales' moves and steps (cf. Nkemleke 2016) as the well-known IMRD (Introduction, Methodology, Research, and Discussion; cf. Schmied 2015) macrostructure seems to be expanding from the most central academic genre, the research paper or article. It also seems to spread from the natural sciences into the social sciences and humanities, although in the latter we find many more structures depending on the topic and sub-discipline. Siepmann et al. (2011: 41-56) start from the first academic text genre at universities, the term paper, and distinguish between the traditional "literary essay" and the "linguistic mini-article". The trend in this direction is so clear that international "Writing Services" sometimes segment their offers into "Chapter 1: Introduction", "Chapter 2: Literature Review", "Chapter 3: Methodology", "Chapter 4: Analysis", "Chapter 5: Discussion", "Chapter 6: Conclusion", in addition to offering to write the (more expensive) complete thesis.

At the micro level, a common problem in theoretical - descriptive writing is the (mis-)use of repetition, esp. in sequences like *I am going to show/demonstrate/prove* – [some examples] – *I have shown/demonstrated/proven*. Repetition without convincing evidence (cf. 4 below) does not make claims facts - and illustrative metaphorisation neither. This does not seem to be a technical term in English, but in French *métaphorisation* and even *métaphorisme* stands for the excessive use of metaphors. Although Siepmann et al. (2011: 450f) list a number of advantages in favour of metaphors ("colour", "reinforce", "facilitate memorisation", popularisation, even "embellish"), it is not always clear to non-native writers to what extent they are effective in the readers' culture.

The development of individual moves in sections is exemplified in Swales/Feak (2012), especially for the research paper, but little for the seminar/term paper or thesis. In contrast, Siepmann et al. (2011: 24-27) discuss in detail that the problem of working from excerpts from a reading list to an individual literature review can be solved by "*interacting*", e.g. grouping and selecting points, establishing a perspective, determining an intention, dividing the material into sections, and entitling sections and paragraphs. Of course, too many quotations disturb the flow of an academic text and may tempt readers to skip sections if the topic is in their well-known field. The hierarchy of quotations seems to be: non-integrated quotation of original (!) first or key definition of a concept, integrated quotations of further steps towards your working definition and paraphrases only for the less important special points (but still properly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism).

Finally, I would like to emphasise that young researchers should be aware of these pattern conventions since they add decidedly to the credibility of academic writers in their research community, i.e. the examiners who read and mark their theses and evaluators who read their research proposals. Even breaking the conventions or playing with them requires a sophisticated awareness of effective handling of metadiscourse features, structural decisions and stylistic choices.