Literature, Spoken Language and Speaking Skills in Second Language Learning

Edited by Christian Jones

Literature, Spoken Language and Speaking Skills in Second Language Learning

The use of literature in second language teaching has been advocated for a number of years, yet despite this there have only been a limited number of studies which have sought to investigate its effects. Fewer still have focused on its potential as a model of spoken language or as a vehicle to develop speaking skills. Drawing upon multiple research studies, this volume fills that gap by exploring how literature is used to develop speaking skills in second language learners. The volume is divided into two parts: literature and spoken language and literature and speaking skills. Part I focuses on studies exploring the use of literature to raise awareness of spoken language features, while Part II investigates its potential as a vehicle to develop speaking skills. Each part contains studies with different research designs and in various contexts including China, Japan and the UK. The research designs used mean that the chapters contain clear implications for classroom pedagogy and research in different contexts.

CHRISTIAN JONES is a Senior Lecturer in TESOL and Applied Linguistics at the University of Liverpool. His main research interests are connected to spoken language, and he has published work on spoken corpora, lexis, lexico-grammar and instructed second language acquisition. He is editor of *Practice in Second Language Learning* (Cambridge, 2018).

Literature, Spoken Language and Speaking Skills in Second Language Learning

Edited by

Christian Jones

University of Liverpool

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Contents

Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Contributors

SHELLEY BYRNE, University of Central Lancashire, UK. Shelley has been involved in English teaching and research for the last ten years and currently works as a lecturer in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). Having conducted research into second language acquisition and spoken language, her recent PhD in Applied Linguistics from UCLan fuelled her interest in learner corpora and lexicogrammar and their contributions to debates surrounding definitions of successful language learning. This continuing area of interest formed the basis of a co-authored book: Successful spoken English: Findings from learner corpora (Routledge, 2017).

JANE CLEARY, University of Central Lancashire, UK. Jane Cleary is a senior lecturer in English language teaching at the University of Central Lancashire. She has been involved in English teaching and teacher-training for over twenty years and has worked in the UK, Spain, Hungary, Hong Kong, Thailand and Japan as well as teaching online. Jane is interested in using literature, stories and drama to develop language learning as well as technology-enhanced teaching, learning and teacher-training.

GARY G. FOGAL, Sophia University, Japan. Gary Fogal is an Associate Professor of Applied English Language and Linguistics at Sophia University. His primary research examines developmental processes informing L2 writing and draws from a complex dynamic systems theory account of additional language development. His work also explores the interface between emergentism and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as well as the utility of literary texts for developing L2 proficiency. He has published in journals such as *Applied Linguistics* and *Language and Sociocultural Theory,* and is co-editor (with Marjolijn H. Verspoor) of *Complex Dynamic Systems Theory and L2 Writing Development* (forthcoming, with John Benjamins).

ATSUSHI IIDA, Gunma University, Japan. Atsushi Iida is an Associate Professor of English and the Chair of Foreign Language Education at Gunma University in Japan. He was awarded his Ph.D. in English

(Composition and TESOL) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. His research interests include second language writing, poetry writing, and literature in second language education. He has published his work in various journals including *Assessing Writing, System, Qualitative Inquiry, Scientific Study of Literature, English Teaching Forum,* and *Asian EFL Journal.*

CHRISTIAN JONES, University of Liverpool, UK. Christian Jones is a Senior Lecturer in TESOL and Applied Linguistics at the University of Liverpool. He has been involved in English language teaching for over twenty five years and has worked in China, Japan, Thailand and the UK, as a teacher, teacher-trainer and researcher. His main research interests are connected to spoken language and he has publish research related to spoken corpora, lexis, lexico grammar and instructed second language acquisition. He is the co-author (with Daniel Waller) of Corpus Linguistics for Grammar: A guide for research (Routledge, 2015), Successful Spoken English: Findings from Learner Corpora (with Shelley Byrne and Nicola Halenko) (Routledge, 2017) and editor of Practice in Second Language Learning, a collection of research on this area (Cambridge University Press, 2018). He is currently a member of the editorial panel for ELT Journal (Oxford University Press).

JIANGFENG LIU, Jiangsu University of Technology, China. Jiangfeng Liu is currently a lecturer in the School of Foreign Languages at Jiangsu University of Technology in China. She has been involved in English language teaching for over fifteen years and has taught both Chinese and international students. Jiangfeng completed her MA TESOL dissertation research in 2016; and since then she has been working actively on the pedagogical deployment of authentic materials to cultivate Chinese learners' communicative competence. She has published in several academic journals in China, such as Theory and Practice in Language Studies and Journal of Language Teaching and Research.

TARA MCILROY is an Associate Professor at Meiji University in Tokyo, Japan. She has a background in secondary English education with a focus on young adult literature and L2 literacy development. She recently developed the following content-based language courses using literature: Global Issues Through Literature; Linguistic Creativity in Poetry; and Literature for Language Teachers. Her ongoing research into poetry in the language classroom helps connect her interests in language education, learner autonomy in second language acquisition, and creative writing.

RICHARD S.PINNER, Sophia University, Japan. Richard Pinner is an associate professor at Sophia University in Tokyo with over 15 years of experience as a language teacher and teacher trainer. He holds a PhD in ELT and Applied

Linguistics and has published several articles on language teaching, most recently in *Language Teaching Research, English Today* and *Applied Linguistics Review.* He is the author of three research monographs and is particularly interested in the areas of authenticity and motivation in ELT and Content and Language Integrated Learning.

SCOTT J. SHELTON-STRONG, Kanda University of International Studies, Japan. Scott is a Learning Advisor and Lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies, in Chiba, Japan. His research interests include Learner Autonomy, Advising in Language Learning, the Psychology of Language Learning and Self-Access. He holds an MA in TESOL from the University of Nottingham and has been involved in English language teaching and learning for more than 25 years. He has published and presented work in a number of areas, including affect in language learning, learner autonomy, advising in language learning (ALL), learning strategies and literature circles in ELT. He is an active member of the Research Institute for Learner Autonomy Education (RILAE) and on the editorial team for the Relay Journal.

PAUL SIMPSON is a Professor of English Language and Head of the Department of English at University of Liverpool, UK. He works in a number of areas of English language and linguistics, including Stylistics, Pragmatics, Critical Linguistics and English Language Pedagogy. His books include: *Stylistics; Language through Literature; Language and Power; On the Discourse of Satire;* and *Language, Ideology and Point of View.* He is currently developing a full-length monograph on the discourse of irony, and is editing for John Benjamins a collection entitled *Style, Rhetoric and Creativity in Language*. He has been the Editor of the journal *Language and Literature*, and was recently Chair of the international Poetics and Linguistics Association.

BRIAN TOMLINSON has worked as a teacher, teacher trainer, curriculum developer, film extra, football coach and university academic in Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, UK, Vanuatu and Zambia, as well as giving presentations in over seventy countries. He is Founder and President of MATSDA (the international Materials Development Association), an Honorary Visiting Professor at the University of Liverpool, a Professor at the Shanghai International Studies University and a TESOL Professor at Anaheim University. He has over one hundred publications on materials development, language through literature, the teaching of reading, language awareness and teacher development, including Applied Linguistics and Materials Development, SLA Theory and Materials Development for Language Learning and The Complete Guide to the Theory and Practice of

Materials Development for Language Learning (with Hitomi Masuhara). He is currently working with Hitomi Masuhara on SLA Applied: Applying Second Language Acquisition Research to Language Learning for Cambridge University Press.

YAN ZHAO, Xijao-Liverpool University, China. Yan Zhao is a lecturer in Applied Linguistics in the Department of English at Xijiao-Liverpool University. She has taught Linguistics, Discourse Analysis and Research Methods modules to Chinese undergraduate and MA TESOL students. Before joining Xijiao-Liverpool University, Yan had taught English for Academic Purposes in the UK, making particular use of creative writing and literature as resources for language learning. Her current research project (as PI), funded by the National Social Science Fund of China, is an action research study which examines Chinese students' identity issues in EAP, ESP, Disciplinary and General English classrooms and subsequently looks for ways to incorporate the gained insights into the design and implementation of classroom instruction in these classrooms.

Foreword

Paul Simpson

Writing in the second half of the twentieth century, the Prague School structuralist Roman Jakobson declared that a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar unconversant with linguistic methods were equally flagrant anachronisms. The second part of Jakobson's aphoristic parallel might seem the more readily demonstrable by today's criteria; after all, a scholar of literature declaring themselves uninterested in language and linguistic methods is like an academic chemist affirming that they have no interest in atoms, elements or molecules. The other side of Jakobson's formula raises a different question, of course. The assumption here is that the study of linguistics cannot be complete without some understanding of the linguistic patterns that comprise literature, or of how language functions 'poetically' in genres of discourse outside literature or even of how the striking compositional features of literary texts invite ways of reading and understanding that transcend the familiar or the routine. In another famous contribution from the second half of the twentieth century, Chomsky invokes the sequence 'Colorless green ideas sleep furiously' as a grammatically well formed, but semantically anomalous sentence. Chomsky clearly did not have literature in mind here, simply because such 'anomalous' language is often the very mainstay of creativity in literary writing. For example, the structurally very similar sequence 'Whispering lunar incantations dissolve the floors of memory' (from T. S. Eliot's 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night') presents a clear challenge for interpretation and understanding if it is not to be dismissed as simply anomalous language. Indeed, readers are tasked with working out not only what semantically complex language like this means, but also *how* it means. And as the insightful contributions in this volume make clear, literary discourse asks very important questions about language and about the learning of language.

In the decades since Jakobson and Chomsky made their observations, the rationale for the scholarly integration of language and literary study has been widely accepted, and literary-linguistics programmes are well established around the world on many university syllabuses in language, literature and linguistics. That said, these programmes are orientated in the main towards

native speakers. As Christian Jones observes in his introduction to this book, whereas the theoretical significance of literary-linguistic pedagogies for second language (L2) speakers is reasonably well understood, there remains a paucity of empirical research that investigates the effectiveness of using literary texts in the second language classroom. In this respect, this collection is timely because its overarching focus is precisely on the role literature can play in non-native speakers' learning of language and in their experiences of thinking and talking about literary texts. Another ground-breaking feature of this book is its sustained focus on the ways in which the use of literary texts can enhance the awareness and development of spoken language and of speaking skills. Commendably, the chapters that comprise this collection incorporate the full gamut of literary composition, covering poetry, drama and fiction, as well screen and television adaptations thereof. The book moves from the compositional minutiae of the seventeen-syllable haiku poem, through the dramatised exchanges in the plays of Harold Pinter, to the corpus-assisted analysis of dialogue in a very large body of prose fiction. This material is supplemented elsewhere in the book by the productive use of screenplays, such as the television dramatisations and film adaptations of, respectively, the writing of Arthur Conan Doyle and of J. K. Rowling. The volume illustrates convincingly not only how a balanced literary-linguistic pedagogy can capture well the nuances of textual composition in literary texts, but also how such tools can help teachers to make informed choices about best practice pedagogically. And as the chapters in his book demonstrate consistently throughout, using literary texts in the second language classroom can improve learners' oral proficiency, communicative competence, linguistic-pragmatic awareness and spoken language skills.

Acknowledgements

1   Introduction

Christian Jones

This book is about using literature – defined in this book as plays, poetry or novels or texts adapted as screenplays in film or television – in the second language classroom. There have been a number of publications in favour of using literature for language learning since the 1980s (e.g. Brumfit and Carter 1986; Duff and Maley 1990; Carter and McRae 1996; Chan 1999; Hall 2005; Paran 2006; Teranishi, Saito and Wales 2015). There have also been a number of activities and materials developed for using various forms of literature in the second language classroom (e.g. Maley and Moulding 1985; Collie and Slater 1987; McRae and Vethamani 1999). It has been argued that literature can develop language awareness (e.g. Brumfit and Carter 1986; Jones and Carter 2011), help students to develop the 'fifth skill' of thinking in the second language (McRae 1991) and help to develop competences from the Common European Framework of References for Language (CEFR) (Jones and Carter 2011), which are used to measure proficiency in a number of second languages (Council of Europe 2001).

Alongside such theoretical arguments, there have been a small number of studies that have produced evidence which suggest that literature can be beneficial in improving communicative competence, language awareness and language acquisition. Gilmore (2011), for example, found that authentic materials in general can be more beneficial than textbooks in developing several key aspects of communicative competence among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners when tested using a variety of quantitative measures. Although Gilmore's study was not focused on literature exclusively but authentic materials in general, we can certainly argue that, as a form of authentic material, literature may be similarly beneficial, if selected carefully. Lao and Krashen (2000) is one of many studies which present clear evidence that using literature in the form of graded readers for extensive reading has demonstrable benefits in terms of vocabulary acquisition and reading speed when compared with control groups that do not undertake extensive reading. Lin (2010) demonstrates how the use of Shakespeare's texts can develop language awareness in Taiwanese EFL learners, when using pre- and post-test measures in addition to qualitative data in the form of learner diaries. Other studies have sought to investigate the

effect of specific types of instruction, from an experimental, learner or teacher perspective. Yang (2002), for example, found a student-centred approach to literature to be more effective than a teacher-centred one, when measured on a pre- and post-test. Schmidt (2004) also found that German learners of English were more positive about the use of Shakespeare in their English lessons when teachers employed a more learner-centred approach. Surveys show that learners can have reservations about the importance of literature when learning a second language (e.g. Martin and Laurie 1993) but that they can also see real value in it for learning language (e.g. Bloemert et al. 2019). Teachers themselves can also express reservations about the benefits of using literature and can demonstrate a lack of awareness of different options available to them in terms of methodology (Paran 2008). This sometimes results in approaches whereby teachers resort to teaching literature as a subject rather than as an aspect of second language learning, which we believe it can be.

Despite the evidence mentioned in the studies reviewed above, Paran (2008) and Fogal (2015) note that in general there is still a lack of empirical research which investigates the effectiveness of literature for second language learning in general (see Teranishi et al. 2015 for a recent exception to this). Of the studies that do exist, even fewer have sought to investigate the effectiveness of literature either as a tool for developing awareness of spoken language or as a tool for developing speaking skills. Although at first glance it may seem odd to discuss literature in terms of its relation to spoken language and speaking skills, we wish to argue that this is a gap in the research. We do so for several connected reasons. Firstly, as mentioned previously, it is often claimed that many second language learning courses are closely linked to the CEFR. The CEFR contains expected competences at each level, and many of these are connected to literature. One such example is 'I can understand contemporary literary prose' (Council of Europe 2001: 5) from the B2 self-assessment grid reading descriptor. In order to show such understanding, learners are likely to need to be able to talk about literature and, to at least some degree, understand the representations of spoken language within it. Therefore, we can argue that there is a clear value in research which informs teachers about how they might use literature to work on CEFR competences such as the one mentioned.

Secondly, conversation is a major part of the daily language use undertaken by people (Thornbury and Slade 2006), and in addition, the development of speaking skills and awareness of spoken language are often of primary importance to learners of English as a second or foreign language (Meddings and Thornbury 2009). However, it can be challenging for teachers to access recordings of unscripted conversations to analyse or discuss in class and, unedited, they may not always make interesting or engaging texts for language learning (Cook 1998). Therefore, it has long been suggested (e.g. McCarthy and Carter 1995; Carter and McRae 1996; Carter 1998) that dialogues from literature

could provide interesting and useful models of spoken English that can also be used to develop speaking skills. This is because learners who are engaged with literary texts already have an interest in what characters are saying and in discussing the themes and ideas writers express as they interact with each other. Once engaged, there are also opportunities to encourage learners to notice features of the conversations within these texts. There is evidence that motivation (in this case via engaging texts), noticing and interaction are all important factors in language acquisition (Schmidt 1990; Long 1996; Dörnyei 2012).

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that conversations in literature are not, of course, identical to unscripted conversation. Literature, by its nature, aims to create an illusion of reality, and the purpose of literary dialogues are not the same as the transactional and social functions of conversations in the real world. However, it is also true that conversations in literature contain many features we find in the spoken language used by real speakers, and this, combined with their potential to provoke discussion as engaging texts, makes them useful as classroom material.

Despite such arguments, as noted previously, little research exists which provides evidence to support or refute them. Teachers may therefore understand such arguments in theory but wonder if they work in practice. Research can help to provide such an evidence base and either support or refute such theoretical positions. This volume seeks to address these gaps in the research by presenting a collection of studies focused upon the ways in which literature can enhance awareness of enhance awareness of spoken language and develop speaking skills. We have sought to produce evidence from studies which take a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approach to data analysis and which have been undertaken in a range of English as a second or foreign language settings. This is in order to make the data more robust and also to allow readers to find studies which are linked to a context with which they are familiar. All chapters are linked by a common question: how can literature enhance awareness of spoken language or develop speaking skills?

The studies in Part I of the book explore literature as a vehicle for developing awareness of spoken language. In this section, Byrne and Jones examine dialogues from a literature corpus in comparison with a spoken corpus in order to understand the extent to which literary dialogues offer a plausible and useful model of conversation. Tomlinson then examines how literature can be used as part of a text-driven approach in order to develop an awareness of pragmatic uses of spoken language. He does so by asking teachers in a range of contexts to evaluate materials taking this approach. Jones and Cleary examine the effects on input enhancement when using televised literature (Sherlock) to develop students' awareness of common features of spoken language. Iida continues the work from Chapter 2 on corpora but instead focuses on students'

composed haiku poems and the features of spoken language they contain. Iida argues that haiku can play an important role in enhancing awareness of spoken language. For the last chapter in this section, Zhao and Liu report on a classroom-based action research study which employed screenplays. They use such materials to test the extent to which such films can develop awareness of pragmatic features of spoken English.

Part II explores the use of literature as a means of developing speaking skills. McIlroy examines the effects of discussing poetry at different levels of familiarity with learners in Japan. Her results show the potential which poetry can have as an aid to discussion and development of conversation strategies in class. Shelton-Strong analyses group discussion from literature circles, whereby learners discuss texts they have read. His research shows the potential for such group discussions to contain many language learning opportunities. Finally, Fogal and Pinner examine the language-related episodes produced by students to measure changes in lexical complexity on the speech of learners as they discussed literature.

While we recognise that many activities could involve both raising awareness of spoken language and developing speaking skills, the division of chapters into these parts will be one that many teachers and researchers recognise and that allows readers to find chapters which most relate to their interests quickly and easily. Explicit links are made between the chapters within each section and between different sections so that readers can see how each relates to the central theme. For example, the skill of noticing can be developed by analysing spoken language in literary dialogues (Chapter 4) and via discussion of literary texts (Chapter 9). Following all chapters, conclusions and implications are given for both teaching and research.

We hope that taken together, the studies will provide evidence which can inform teachers as they make choices in the classroom as well as furthering the research in this area.

References

Bloemert, J., Paran, A., Jansen, E. and Grift, W. V. D., 2019. 'Students' perspective on the benefits of EFL literature education', *The Language Learning Journal* 47(3): 371–384.

Brumfit, C. and Carter, R. 1986. *Literature and Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carter, R. 1998. 'Orders of reality: CANCODE, communication, and culture', *ELT Journal* 52(1): 43–56.

Carter, R. and McRae, J. 1996. *Language, Literature and the Learner: Creative Classroom Practice*. London: Longman.

Chan, P. K. 1999. 'Literature, language awareness and EFL', *Language Awareness* 8(1): 38–50.

Collie, J. and Slater, S. 1987. *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cook, G. 1998. 'The uses of reality: A reply to Ronald Carter', *ELT Journal* 52(1): 57–63.

Council of Europe, 2001. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dörnyei, Z. 2012. *Motivation in Language Learning*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Duff, A. and Maley, A. 1990. *Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fogal, G. G. 2015. 'Pedagogical stylistics in multiple foreign language and second language contexts: A synthesis of empirical research', *Language and Literature* 24 (1): 54–72.

Gilmore, A. 2011. '"I prefer not text": Developing Japanese learners' communicative competence with authentic materials', *Language Learning* 61(3): 786–819.

Hall, G., 2005. *Literature in Language Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jones, C. and Carter, R. 2011. 'Literature and language awareness:Using literature to achieve CEFR outcomes', *Journal of Second language Teaching and Research* 1 (1): 69–82.

Lao, C. Y. and Krashen, S. 2000. 'The impact of popular literature study on literacy development in EFL: More evidence for the power of reading', *System* 28(2): 261–270.

Lin, H. W. 2010. 'The taming of the immeasurable: An empirical assessment of language awareness', in Paran, A. and Sercu, L. (eds.), *Testing the Untestable in Language Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 191–216.

Long, M. 1996. 'The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition', in Richie, W. and Bhatia, T. K. (eds.), *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. San Diego: Academic Press, 413–468.

Maley, A. and Moulding, S. 1985. *Poem into Poem: Reading and Writing Poems with Students of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, A. L. and Laurie, I. 1993. 'Student views about the contribution of literary and cultural content to language learning at intermediate level', *Foreign Language Annals* 26(2): 188–207.

McCarthy, M. and Carter, R. 1995. 'Spoken grammar: What is it and how can we teach it?', *ELT Journal* 49(3): 207–218.

McRae, J. 1991. *Literature with a Small 'l'*. London: Macmillan.

McRae, J. and Vethamani, M. E. 1999. *Now Read On: A Course in Multicultural Reading*. London: Routledge.

Meddings, L. and Thornbury, S. 2009. *Teaching Unplugged: Dogme in English Language Teaching*. Surrey: Delta Publishing.

Paran, A. 2006. *Literature in Language Teaching and Learning*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Inc.

    2008. 'The role of literature in instructed foreign language learning and teaching: An evidence-based survey', *Language Teaching* 41(4): 465–496.

Schmidt, I. 2004. 'Methodische vorgehensweisen und schülerinteresse: Bericht über ein empirisches forschungsprojekt' [Methodological approaches and pupil interest: Report on an empirical study], in Schabert, I. (ed.), *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 140. Bochum: Verlag und Druckkontor Kamp Gmbh, 196–211.

Schmidt, R. 1990. 'The role of consciousness in second language learning', *Applied Linguistics* 11: 129–158.

Teranishi, M., Saitō, Y. and Wales, K. 2015. *Literature and Language Learning in the EFL Classroom*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thornbury, S. and Slade, D. 2006. *Conversation: From Description to Pedagogy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yang, A. 2002. 'Science fiction in the EFL class', *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 15(1): 50–60.

Part I

Literature and Spoken Language

2   The Realism of Conversation in Literature

Shelley Byrne and Christian Jones

This chapter analyses conversations from a corpus of literature in order to uncover the extent to which these conversations contain typical features of spoken language, such as vague language and discourse markers. Such features have long been identified as key features of spoken language in corpora based on unscripted conversations (Carter and McCarthy 2017). The extent to which naturally occurring spoken language is similar to and different from literary conversations has been researched within the field of stylistics (e.g. Hughes 1996; Semino and Short 2004), but the extent to which conversations in literature could provide a useful model for learners of English as a Foreign Language and English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL) is less clear. Drawing upon corpus data from the CLiC Dickens corpus (Mahlberg et al. 2016) and the BYU-BNC spoken corpus (Davies 2004), this chapter seeks to explore how often common features occur and whether the frequency of occurrence is significant in comparison to data from unscripted conversations. We also explore the data qualitatively to examine whether the functions of common spoken language features differ or are similar. In doing so, we hope to uncover the extent to which conversations in literature can offer a plausible model of spoken English for EFL or ESL learners.

Introduction

Research in corpus linguistics has helped to describe common features of conversational language. We now commonly talk of spoken as well as written grammar (e.g. Biber et al. 1999; Leech 2000; Carter and McCarthy 2006; Rühlemann 2007; Timmis 2013), and there is an understanding that conversations cannot realistically be compared with written language on identical terms. To give examples of such differences, conversation is normally co-constructed (McCarthy 2010), it can contain forms which function differently from those in writing such as vague language, and it is often subject to rapid topic shifts (Carter