Spoken Academic Lexicogrammar and Discourse Patterns

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While there is a considerable body of research on written academic English, much less is known about spoken discourse in academia and how the various spoken genres impact on and shape the experiences of students and faculty. In particular, learning and speaking in the academy go beyond lectures and tutorials to include study groups, conferences and colloquia, office hour exchanges and dissertation defences. In this paper, I present MICASE, the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English, and the results of some research I have conducted on this specialised corpus at the lexicogrammatical and discoursal levels, showing how the availability of this corpus has now made possible many empirical insights, which have thus far eluded researchers. The theoretical and pedagogical implications of this and previous research on the corpus will then be discussed, and a brief outline of a planned book on the grammar of academic speech by the MICASE team will be given. Future directions for the MICASE project will also be mentioned, with the emphasis on how the enhanced corpus may be used for pedagogical and language testing purposes.