

RECOGNIZING GRADUATE APPLICATION MATERIALS AS A GENRED CULTURALLY EMBEDDED FORM OF WRITING

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Abstract:

English teachers teach many forms of writing from the argumentative essay to creative writing. Students who seek entry to overseas graduate programs must also be able to write a research statement which is less commonly taught in S1 programs. Additionally they must also be able to communicate writing expectations to reference letter writers who serve as writing colleagues. Most challenging are the differences in the cultural assumptions of the readers of these documents. In this presentation Adrian argues for understanding and explicit teaching of these genres of writing.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND BUSINESS ENGLISH**Baramee Kheovichai**

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E-mail: kiao_ra@yahoo.com**Abstract**

This paper outlines possible contributions that discourse analysis can make to the study of business English. It first explains the differences between business English and casual conversation, resulting in the need for the linguistic description of business English. A model of business discourse analysis (Bhatia, 2004) is explained. Three example research strands of business discourse analysis, including genre analysis, relational aspects of interaction and business English used by non-native speakers, are explicated. Implications for language teaching are then discussed.

Key words: Discourse analysis, business English, genre analysis, relational language, intercultural communication

A. Introduction

English has long been an important language of business and commerce. The importance of English has grown very fast, especially nowadays when international business plays a pivotal role in the economy of every country. In consequence, the teaching of business English is an important part of English language teaching around the world. With globalization and computer-mediated communication, the importance of business English continues to paramount

Despite the importance of business English, it was not until recently that research on business English was conducted rigorously (Chakorn, 2002). It has been noted that material writers of business English often rely on their ideas of how language is used in the business contexts instead of investigating authentic language use (Koester, 2010). Studies have shown that language taught in business English textbooks and authentic language used in business contexts are different (Bargiela-chiappini, Nickerson, & Planken, 2007).

In consequence, there is an evident need to investigate language use in the business contexts, which can then inform material writing. In fact, in recent years there have been studies that investigated such language use (cf. Bhatia, 2004; Handford, 2010; Koester, 2010). Among these studies, discourse analysis plays a key role in the description of business English, such as genre analysis (Bhatia, 1993, 2008) and the relational aspect of spoken business discourse (Koester, 2010).

This paper outlines how discourse analysis furthers our understanding of business English and how to apply this knowledge in the teaching of business English. Section B explains what discourse analysis is and why it is useful for describing business English. Section C introduces some of the research strands of business discourse analysis. Section D discusses implications for language teaching and issues related to how findings from business discourse analysis can be applied to language teaching.

B. Discourse analysis and business English

There are various definitions of discourse analysis as it is a multidisciplinary field and has several schools of thought. However, according to Jones (2012) there are some key main points and commonalities which can be summarized in the following points.

One of the most important characteristics of discourses analysis is that it investigates authentic, naturally occurring language. This is in contrast to Chomskyan paradigm of linguistics which relies on native speaker's intuition and normally uses introspection as a method of research. Discourse analysis involves collecting naturally occurring data, such as recording of spoken interaction and written documents in order to perform linguistic analysis. Second, discourse analysis looks at linguistic units larger than a sentence level as instances of language use often extends beyond one sentence. In terms of linguistic unit, discourse is larger than syntax. Third, discourse analysis pays attention to how contexts influence language use. Contexts here involve social, institutional, professional and communicative situations. These variables index the role and power relation between interactants, which then shapes the way these interactants communicate with each other.

These features characterize the study of discourse analysis and these can be applied to the study of business discourse which is about: