

Discourse and Genre

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Genre

- Particular communicative event = genre
- “A type of discourse that occur in a particular setting, that has distinctive and recognizable patterns and norms of organization and structure and that has particular and communicative functions” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.224).
- “ways in which people ‘get things done’ through their use of spoken and written discourse” (Paltridge, p.84).
- A genre is ‘a kind of’ text
- e.g. a letter to the editor, news reports, parliamentary speeches, weather reports, academic lecture, casual conversation etc

Genre Analysis

- The approach of genre analysis => English for Specific Purposes (ESP) based on John Swales (1981, 1990). e.g. the stages of discourse structure of texts/schematic/generic structure of text.=>ESP School.
- Genres change through time due to technological change, a leader etc.
- e.g. internal office memo => Internet Chat room, online discussion forum etc
- 'Genre embedding' (Bhatia, 1997). e.g. a newspaper article is used for an advertisement.

Conts...

- Genres may vary in terms of typicality. One text may be typical or less typical of one genre but still belongs to a particular genre. e.g. academic lectures in the university
- Defining genre: Martin (1984) defined genre as “a staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture” (p.25)
- “*Social* because we participate in genres with other people; *goal* oriented because we use genres to get the things done; *staged* because it takes use few steps to reach our goal” (Martin & Rose, 2003, p.7). → Sydney School



Choice and constraint in the use of spoken and written genres

- Swales (2004) said that there are both choices and constraints, regularity and chaos. Genres are dynamic and open to change, but it is not a case of “free for all” or “anything goes”.
- Devit (2004). Conformity among genre users ‘is a fact of genre, for genres provide an expected way of acting’. She argues that there are often consequences of violating the genre expectations, and these can not be predicted. Both constraint and choice are the necessary and positive components of genres.

Assigning text to a “genre category”

- Cook (1989) set some factors to determine genre category such as: author, intended audience, purpose of text, situation when a text occurs, the physical form, title of text etc. see. Figure 4.2. Typical features of a letter to the editor. p.87.
- Morton’s (1999) book about Monica Lewinsky.
- Hasan (1989a) the crucial properties of a genre can be expressed in a range possible textual structures.
- Genre may not have exactly the same discourse structure (Askehave and Swales, 2000).

Conts...

- e.g. academic essay=>explanation, evaluation, and argument or combination of these.
- *Communicative purpose* is an important (although) complex criterion for deciding whether a text is an instance of a particular genre.
- Assigning a text to a genre category, then, does not necessarily involve exact match in terms of characteristics or properties. Rather, it involves “sufficient similarities” (Swales, 1990).
- Genres are most helpfully seen as “resources for meaning” rather than systematic rule (Swale, 2002).

Relationship between genres

- genre chains = interrelatedness of genres
e.g. job advertisement II position description II letter of application II resume II job interview II offer of appoint II negotiation of offer.
- # Knowledge about genres = the totality of genres available in the particular sector (Swales, 2004; 22).
- * Genre networks = open genres & supporting (occluded) genres (Swales and Feak, 2000). See p.94.

conts...

- An example of genre sets: Other Floors, Other Voices (Swales, 1998). See p.95.
- # Written genres across cultures.
 - * contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1996) = the analysis of discourse structure of academic writing in different languages and cultures, inspired by Kaplan (1966).
 - * intercultural rhetoric (Connor, 2004)
- # Spoken genres across culture
- Nakanishi's (1998) examination of 'going on a first date in Japanese'. Having dinner with someone to know him/her better. Compared to those in US.

Conts...

- Japanese women avoiding silence during the date and asking a lot of questions to find out more about their dating partner.
- The Japanese women were also much less hesitant in expressing their ideas and feelings on a first date than they would be in many other genres in Japanese, in which generally silence and reticence are perfectly acceptable
- If the Japanese women had been silent he found, they often thought that the date had not been a success. See p.97.

Conts...

- In the US study, the men took pro active roles → in setting up the date and diciding where it would be, as they did in Japanese study.
- In both study the men were more proactive and women were more reactive
- In the US data: women saw their role as following their dating partner's lead in the conversation, and helping to keep the conversation going.
- In the Japanese data: women much more initiated the conversation and the choice of topics in the conversation. Further, see. page. 97.

Steps in genre analysis

- Should be flexibly and selectively depending on: the starting point, purpose, aspects of genre that we focus on, our prior level of knowledge of the particular genre.
- The first step is to consider what is already known about particular genre e.g. situational and cultural context
- the next step is to refine the analysis: by defining the speaker or the writer of text, the audience of text, the relationship with each other etc. (See. Wahyudi, 2010; 2011).
- the next stage is to select the collections of texts we wish to examine



The social and cultural contexts of genre

- the setting of text
 - the focus and the perspective of text
 - the purposes of text etc see.p.99.
- # The context analysis of theses and dissertation
- The discourse structure of genres see. p.100-101.

Application of genre analysis

- Hammon & Macken-Horarick (1999) argue that genre based teaching can help students gain access to texts and discourses which, will hopefully help them participate more successfully in second language spoken and interaction
- Swales (2004) genres provide a frame which enables people to take a part in, and interpret, particular communicative events. Making this genre knowledge explicit can provide learners with the knowledge and the skills they need to communicate successfully in particular situation. It can also provide learners with access to socially powerful forms of language.

Assignment 4: Journal proposal project

- **Due 11 April (3 weeks from now)**
- 1600 words
- **The journal proposal should cover:**
 - (1) Background, (2) research questions, (3) Objectives (4) Methodology (research approach + data collection), (5) the significance of research

=== Good Luck ===

Reference
Paltridge, B. (2006). Discourse Analysis.
London: Continuum.



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