EXPLOITING GENRE ANALYSIS IN CONCEPTUALIZING A COURSE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES TO ENGINEERING STUDENTS

BY

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ABSTRACT

Title of the Thesis: Exploiting Genre Analysis in Conceptualizing a Course for Teaching English for Academic Purposes to Engineering Students

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The English Language Teaching Unit of the Faculty of Engineering (FE), University of Peradeniya is faced with the problem of teaching subject-specific English to undergraduates within prescribed time limits to help them follow their course in the English medium. This thesis uses genre analysis in conceptualizing a course for teaching academic English related to engineering, paying attention to academic writing. The two kinds of genre analysis, Genre Analysis (GA) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)-based genre analysis, are analysed to show that these two kinds could effectively be used to teach the generic conventions and the lexico-grammatical features respectively. The pedagogic approaches to academic writing are critiqued by reference to the genre-based approach proposed in this thesis and, among other things, the hegemony that might in principle be exercised within academic communities through such approaches is examined. The models proposed in GA for the structuring of content in different sections of Research Articles (RAs) are specified to set out the generic conventions in terms of which the schemata of these sections are arranged and the linguistic features which realize these conventions are illustrated with examples. Extracts from RAs are examined closely to show how the conventions are used to structure the content in RAs. The salient lexico-grammatical features explicated in SFG are illustrated with examples and texts are analysed to elucidate how these features are exploited by writers for various purposes in the construction of knowledge. Also analysed by reference to this are examples of students' writing to show their problems and to suggest ways of addressing them. A pedagogic model is developed to show how teachers could help students take control of the lexico-grammatical features used to establish causal-conditional relation. The features brought out from GA and SFG in this thesis constitute the essential core of a comprehensive academic writing course. The problems teachers may encounter in using these approaches in classroom situations and ways of solving them are discussed.