

Revaluing ESP teaching: Applying Multi-Dimensional Analysis to teach genres to Sri Lankan undergraduates

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It has been a long felt need in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) pedagogy to provide more authentic and effective lesson materials to teachers instructing undergraduates on genres related to professional contexts. In this regard, introducing corpus analysis techniques to traditional ESP teaching becomes invaluable when considering the mismatches that have been cited between the content of existing teaching materials and the reality of the actual use of language- a problem which has undermined the value of traditional ESP teaching and has presented itself as a challenge for ESP practitioners to overcome. This paper presents the partial findings of a corpus driven research study conducted on two speech genres pertaining to the professional world - the Welcome Address and the Vote of Thanks, and reports their characteristics and lexico-grammatical features. Two specialised corpora were compiled, and a dimensional analysis, a concept introduced by Douglas Biber, was conducted using the tool Multi-dimensional Analysis Tagger. Results reveal that both genres are informational and non-narrative in nature with elaborated situation independent reference. They possess an above average use of nominalizations and other nouns, prepositional phrases, first and second person pronouns, amplifiers, sentence relatives, WH relative clauses on subject position, infinitives, phrasal co-ordination, split infinitives and lengthy words. However, while the Welcome Address does not mark the author's point of view, the Vote of Thanks is unmarked in this dimension. While the Vote of Thanks is found to be non-technical and non-abstract, the Welcome Address is unmarked in this fifth dimension. Drawing on the research findings, exercises were designed to help students produce stylistically authentic speeches with an accurate use of language.

Keywords: Genre analysis, ESP, Multi-dimensional Analysis