Nature and function of academic english

Education

There has been an ongoing discourse about different approaches that translates to the best way of teaching the English language and what appropriately constitute to the language itself. Genre knowledge has been the source of much discourse in the academe because of how it affects the disciplinary and professional cultures of teachingAcademicEnglish (Berkenkotter & Huckin 24).

The academic discourse further covers the features of the language in terms of linguistic, grammatical and vocabulary features. The discussion of such features and how it is affected under the different approaches is evaluated to provide for the grounds for the approach that must be seriously considered in for the academe use. Research about written discourse and text that hold such a prominence in the academy are analyzed according to formal discourse genres, their characteristics as well as the common linguistic features it possess (Hinkel 2).

Above the question of the importance of the genre approach, there is also a question as to how explicit the teaching instruction must be. Contradicting sides would argue about the necessity of the teaching such approach (Freedman & Medway 193). Others would argue if it is even possible (Freedman & Medway 193). Others would wonder if it would benefit the students or would it prove to be more dangerous (Freedman & Medway 193). There is also a discourse about the right timing by which such an approach should and could be applied to a class depending upon the students' age and capabilities in writing (Freedman & Medway 193).

Genre & Academic Discourse

Literary genres were discussed as early as in Aristotle's The Poetics and developed in the Rhetoric that shows how he defined genres as a simple way of classifying text types, this is what was generally accepted over time (Clarke 242). According to traditional views, genre was limited to being primarily literary, defined by textual regularities in terms of form and content, classified into simplified categories and subcategories (Clarke 242). Under this definition, genre was not seen as relevant in terms of the discussion of composition and pedagogy (Clarke 242).

Most of the linguists advocate that there should be a concentration for mastery of the different genres in the English language and that the teachers should focus on giving specific instruction that teaches the characteristic of each genre (Mercer & Swann 222). The students need a model by which they could follow in keeping with a genre structure (Mercer & Swann 222). They see grammar to play an important role in the process of learning the genres because it enables the students to " manipulate the text" contradictory to the process approach that sees the trouble in explicit manner of teaching grammar due to its unnecessity and danger to the students' learning (Mercer & Swann 222).

The common misconception would refer to genre and text type to merely be the same aspect of a text but in reality they actually differ in terms of texts with particular genres having different linguistic characteristics and other literary features (Johns 73). However, different genres can be similar linguistically. Genre can be described as text characterized by external criteria, for instance written or spoken text, different audience, different context or purpose (Johns 73-74). On the other hand, text types can be

represented by rhetorical modes such as " exposition" or " argument" as different text types (Johns 74). They are seen to be similar in terms of internal discourse patterns despite having different genres (Johns 74). The two concepts then refer to complementary perspectives on texts however they still remain different (Johns 74).

Teaching and Writing Genres

In a classroomenvironment, text types that are written and spoken are related to the different demands by which the school requires and depending upon the subject areas of focus. There are different writing tasks that involve genres that go way beyond the literary realm (Schleppegrell 77). Factual and analytical genres exist under the evolution of the academic English language. The usual technique would be for students to read massive amount of authentic texts to give awareness to the difference of the ranges of genres and determine the registers they encounter for their own chose subject matters (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 303). Students are then made of aware of the differences between academic and non-academic genres. Through the process of being exposed to the different genres, the students are familiarized with the different lexical, grammatical and organizational features of the texts that exist that train them along the way (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 303).

Genre Knowledge

The academic discourse on genre gives two perspectives in terms of structurational and sociocognitive that deals with the activity language undergoes from diverse fields like " sociolinguistics, cognitivepsychology,

educational anthropology and conversation analysis (Berkenkotter & Huckin 24)." This is the new concept that is emerging on top of the rich body of research regarding the genre's structure from the structurational theory (Berkenkotter & Huckin 24). There is the constant need for the academe to monitor and recognize the changing pattern that language undergoes and thus the changes in the genres as well (Berkenkotter & Huckin 24).

Full participation any general disciplinary and professionalculturerequires knowledge of the written genre and they are referred to as the " intellectual scaffolds on which community-based knowledge is constructed" thus placing a priority to monitor the pattern changes (Berkenkotter & Huckin 24). At the same time, they are worth examining because the genre of academic discourse also produce criteria like a " community's norm, epistemology, ideology, and social ontology (Berkenkotter & Huckin 25)"

Linguistic Features of Academic Discourse

According to Martlew and Sorsby (1995) " Written language like spoken language achieves communicative ad conceptualgoalsby using a complex system of arbitrary symbols and conventional rules... In literate societies, a developed writing system is pervasive in children's environment and it is likely that each individual child constructs, or re-invents, their own approach to writing from whatever salient experience the environment offers which they can utilize at different levels of development (Mercer & Swann 287)."

There are certain linguistic expectations from students who enter into an academic arena and such a language practice can be reflected in most social groups more than others (Schleppegrell 43). Some students can encounter

difficulty because of a lack of familiarity to such linguistic standard as there are differences between the registers in an academic scenario and that of an informal interaction (Schleppegrell 43). Despite the fact that the classrooms can provide for an avenue for the students to develop such a standard and be trained by spoken and written language activities, the teachers need to remember how the forms of language can take its place in the academic context (Schleppegrell 44).

For example, academic texts are by nature " informationally dense and authoritatively presented (Schleppegrell 44)." In order to get the extract the position and information from certain texts, the teachers and students must be able to unpack the meaning and recognize the position and ideologies of the text (Schleppegrell 44). Linguistic choices and the awareness of it enable a wider participation in the contexts of learning (Schleppegrell 44). Having a clear perspective of the grammatical features that are seen as tools in deciphering school texts then provides as the foundation for a more efficient research of language development in terms of functionality as well as learning new registers (Schleppegrell 44-45).

Most research focus on grammatical and lexical features of the student's language production that produces a language analysis from a systematic functional linguistics (Schleppegrell 45). Deviating from a structural approach to grammar, a functional approach do not just focus on their syntactic category (nouns, verbs, adjectives) or their elements in the sentence (subject, predicate), it focus on identifying the revealing the context of schooling in the language that are used in the text, focusing on the register as the so-called " manifestation of context (Schleppegrell 45).

Studies show how different features are values when comparing writing in writing classes and writing in other academic courses (Hinkel 5). The important consideration if providing the students with linguistic and writing skills that would equip them to handle new information and expand their knowledge (Hinkel 5). Some practitioners say that exposure to a variety of reading and experience with writing does not constitute to having a heightened awareness in discourse, vocabulary, grammar and linguistic features of academic writing or having better writing skills (Hinkel 5). They defended explicit instruction in advanced academic writing and text is what can provide the utmost equipment (Hinkel 5).

General Nature and Functions of Academic English

Furthermore, Martlew and Sorsby (1995) said, " Writing however is a visible language, graphic symbolic system whose roots we suggest lie in pictographic representation before links are established with spoken language. In thisrespect, development reflects evolution in that all writing systems which represent sounds of language evolved from pictorial representations rather than from spoken language." Academic English offers such changing concepts (Hyland 2). The one who coined the definition for English used in academic purposes was Tim Johns (Hyland 2). It was during this time that English became an economic imperative and it has been the leading language for disseminating academic knowledge (Hyland 2).

Eachdiscourse communityhas developed its own mode of discourse. This constitutes to the growth of Academic English. By nature it would expand and evolve to fit and address the different fields of study in need to communicate, basically that points to every discipline (Hoadley-Maidment &

Mercer). New objects, processes, relationships and others need new terms to be added in the lexicon. There is a need to reinterpret words that already exists to become other words that are defined by their specific fields, like a set is different in conversational English and Mathematical English (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 285).

New words are also created as part of an existing word stock, like clockwise or feedback (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 285). There is also a need to borrow from another language. A term called " calquing" mean having to create new words to imitate a word that already exists from another language like omnipotens mean almighty in Latin (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 286). There is also a need to invent totally new words like the time when the word " gas" was created to be party of the field of chemistry (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 286).

There is also creating " locutions" or sense of phrases and compound words as well as non-native word stocks (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 286). The nature of English is known to be shaped by certain social and cultural functions under the language of academic communities of discourse (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 290-291). The researchers suggest for having more than one valid and culturally based ideology regarding Academic English for it to be open to other cultures and factors (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 291).

Conclusion

Due to culture, styles of writing differ but this does not make one inferior over the other (Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 290). Further research about

Academic English should have a greater level of sensitivity for other cultures or forcultural diversity(Hoadley-Maidment & Mercer 290). It is also necessary to have a proper balance between over-prespecification of the curriculum and planning and the right amount in terms of explicit teaching of genre and other features according the students' knowledge, abilities and background (Wiley & Hartung- Cole 205). The academe must not loose sight of social-cultural context of the relevance of Academic English in exchange for a more uniform approach or for the search for a common standard for academic discourse (Wiley & Hartung- Cole 205).

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