

## DISCOURSE ANALYSIS FOR BUSINESS

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| <b>MODULE CODE</b>                               | <b>LE2004</b>                          |
| <b>MODULE TITLE</b>                              | <b>Discourse Analysis for Business</b> |
| <b>Number of Aston Credits:</b>                  | <b>10</b>                              |
| <b>Name of Module Convenor:</b>                  | <b>Carol Marley</b>                    |
| <b>PRE-REQUISITES</b>                            | No specific subject pre-requisites     |
| <b>Programme(s) for which module is offered:</b> | All Level 2 English; IBAM              |
| <b>Teaching Period when offered:</b>             | <b>1</b>                               |

### 1. Module Learning Outcomes

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

Students will gain knowledge of:

- features of institutional talk
- the influence of medium, context and relationships in a range of interactions
- major written business genres

#### **Cognitive / Intellectual Skills**

By the end of the module students will be able to:

- process and evaluate a variety of authentic business texts
- explain and select appropriately a range of discursive strategies to achieve business purposes

#### **Subject-specific skills including Practical / Professional Skills**

By the end of the module students will be able to:

- participate in and lead both formal and informal discussions
- present ideas, information and strategies effectively in meetings

#### **Transferable skills**

Students will:

- enhance their skills of information presentation
- have experience of collaboratively conducting a research project

### **INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS**

The module is designed to help students with native or near-native proficiency in English to become aware of the role played by spoken and written forms of discourse in business communications, and to develop the skills necessary to participate successfully in both forms of business discourse.

## **CORPORATE CONNECTIONS**

The module is concerned with the development of students studying business in an International context. This is done by the medium of practical exercises based on authentic examples of spoken and written business discourse.

## **CONTENT**

For the study of spoken business discourse, students will work with a range of authentic texts, drawn from relevant business environments, and become familiar with the concepts of register, genre and discourse community as they apply to the business context. The focus of this part of the module will be on the development of appropriate oral communication skills to enable students to function in a business environment.

Both input and practice will centre on the following key areas:

- The impact of status, gender and culture on talk
- The role of small talk in building relationships, both face-to-face and on the phone
- Realising specific functions of talk such as persuading, requesting, advising, explaining, demonstrating and instructing in a range of work-related contexts

The study of written discourse will cover a range of authentic materials which will be drawn from relevant business environments. The materials will be used to focus on some of the following areas:

### **Rhetorical structure of business texts**

- writing as communication
- relating to different texts and potential audiences of such texts
- production of written text at discourse level
- writer's evaluation of the potential reader
- assessment of the writer's intention

## **METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Key concepts will be introduced in lectures and workshops involving both individual and group work.

Group projects will reflect the importance of team work in business, and help learners to develop the requisite spoken communication skills. These will be also be practised through role-plays, simulations, and the study of relevant discourse types. Students will be expected to conduct a small-scale research project involving authentic data.

Active participation will be encouraged throughout and students will be given ample opportunity to develop their own writing skills through a variety of projects.

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| Lectures and workshops                          | 20 hours  |
| Workshop preparation and reading                | 30 hours  |
| Research, preparation and assessed presentation | 25 hours  |
| Research and writing for assessed assignment    | 25 hours  |
| Total learning hours                            | 100 hours |

## METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Presentation of research project 40 %

[in class; in week 8; 5 mins]

Participation in role-play and class discussions 20 %

Written assignment 40 %

[Research project by candidate number; 3000-3500 words; to be submitted by Friday at 12noon at the end of week 25]

**Note:** Assessment for this module may involve collecting data from human subjects, a procedure which requires formal ethical approval. **ALL** students are therefore required to submit an outline of their proposed assignment via Blackboard during the last week before the Christmas / Easter vacation (precise date to be specified at the start of the module). Any outline referring to human subjects MUST be accompanied by a completed ethical approval form for the tutor's signature. Any such assignment submitted without the form having been approved before the research starts will be awarded a Fail mark.

## CORE TEXT

Bhatia, V.K. 1993. *Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings*. London: Longman.

## FURTHER READING

Bargiela-Chiappini, F. & Harris, S. J. 1997. *Managing language: the discourse of corporate meetings*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Bilbow, G. 1995. Requesting strategies in cross-cultural business meetings. *Pragmatics*, 5: 45-55.

Button, G & Casey, N. 1988/9. Topic initiation: business-at-hand. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 22:61-92.

Callow, K. & Callow, J.C. 1992. Text as Purposive Communication: A meaning-based Analysis. In: W.C. Mann and S.A. Thompson (eds.)

- Discourse Description: Diverse Linguistic Analyses of a Fund-raising Text*. Pragmatics and Beyond New Series 16. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 5-38.
- Cotton, D. & Robbins, S. 1993. *Business Class*. London: Pearson Education/Longman.
- Coulthard, M. (ed.). 1994. *Advances in written text analysis*. London: Routledge
- Hannay, M. & Mackenzie, J.L. 1990. The writing student: From the Architect of Sentences to the Builder of Texts. In W. Nash (ed.) *The Writing Scholar, Studies in Academic Discourse*. Newbury Park, California/London: Sage
- Hinkel, E. 1997. Indirectness in L1 and L2 academic writing. *Journal of Pragmatics* 27:361-386.
- Holmes, R. 1997. Genre Analysis and the Social Sciences: An investigation of the Structure of Research Article Discussion Sections in Three Disciplines. *English for Specific Purposes* 7: 113-122.
- Sinclair, M. 1993. Are academic texts really decontextualized and fully explicit? A pragmatic perspective on the role of context in written communication. *Text* 13:4: 529-58
- Tannen, D. 1995. The power of talk : who gets heard and why. *Harvard Business Review*, 73: 138-145.
- Ventola, E. 1998. Interpersonal choices in academic work. In: A. Sanchez-Macarro and R. Carter (eds.). *Linguistic Choice across Genres*. Amsterdam: Benjamins: 117-136.
- Ventola, E. & Mauranen, A. 1996. *Academic Writing: Intercultural and Textual issues*. Pragmatics and Beyond New Series, 41. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Witherspoon, P. & Wohler, K. 1996. An approach to developing communication strategies for enhancing organisational diversity. *Journal of Business Communication*. 33/4: 375-399.