

Instructional Materials for Secondary Level Writing Instruction: A Systemic-Functional Investigation

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Abstract

This investigation addresses the role of model texts in writing instruction, since most current approaches to writing instruction share the common practice of studying and emulating model texts (Hyland, 2003; Melrose, 1991; Nunan, 1999; Paltridge, 2001; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2007; White & Arndt, 1991). A systemic-functional theoretical framework was used to analyse pedagogic models (formal and informal letters) being used in selected secondary schools, focusing on how Register and Genre are realized in these texts, and the aspects of Register and Genre which are given attention by teachers in teaching-learning activities. Preliminary findings indicate similarities in Register and Genre traits for the texts analysed, in contrast with considerable diversity in the aspects of Register and Genre being emphasized by teachers. The findings shed light on the role of written communication in English within the context of the multilingual Malaysian society, which reflects the sociosemiotic perspective of language in systemic-functional linguistics (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; M. A. K. Halliday, 1978; M.A.K. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This suggests that Register and Genre merit greater attention in the secondary English Language syllabus, given that writing is widely acknowledged to be the hardest skill to master for learners of English as a second language (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Harmer, 2004; Kroll, 2001; Reid, 2001; Savignon, 2001).

Keywords: *instructional materials, writing instruction, genre, register, systemic-functional*

A Study on Contrastive Rhetoric in English Writing and the Myside Bias

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Abstract

One effective method for conveying one's thoughts and ideas is through writing. As Leki and Carson (1994) emphasize: "ability to write well is necessary both to achieve academic success and to demonstrate that achievement" (p. 83). Many scholars believe that cultural backgrounds play a vital role in how an individual writes. With the growing number of Iranian students studying overseas, it is necessary to see whether the Persian rhetorical culture does in fact influence students' English writing. In this study, the researcher aims to investigate the style differences between English and Persian writing and to determine whether participating Iranian EFL students transfer Persian writing cultural norms to their English argumentative writings. Also, both students' and teachers' perspectives on the most problematic areas of English writing will be studied. The presence of myside bias was also

considered in the essays. Data for the study was collected through two argumentative essays (Persian and English). The results were triangulated through the use of a questionnaire and interview. The findings support the contrastive rhetoric theory in that the students' L1 does influence the way they write in L2.

Keywords: *Contrastive Rhetoric, Student Perception, Teacher Perception, Myside bias, Contrastive Features*

Analisis Pembinaan Frasa-Frasa Nombor Bahasa Cina dalam Kalangan Pelajar Melayu

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Abstrak

Pembelajaran Bahasa Cina (BC) sebagai bahasa asing semakin popular di seluruh dunia sejajar dengan pembangunan ekonomi negara China. Dalam Rancangan Malaysia Kesembilan, 2006-2010, telah dinyatakan BC diperkenalkan sebagai kursus elektif bahasa asing di institut pengajian tinggi awam (IPTA). Kajian ini merupakan kajian rintis untuk meninjau pembinaan frasa-frasa nombor BC dalam kalangan pelajar Melayu. Ini kerana penggunaan frasa-frasa nombor adalah penting untuk berinteraksi dalam kehidupan harian. Kajian ini bertumpu pada topik tarikh, masa dan harga dalam Kursus *Mandarin For Beginners* di Universiti Malaysia Pahang. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah triangulasi, iaitu kertas ujian, soal selidik dan temu bual. Kertas ujian digunakan untuk melihat pembinaan frasa-frasa nombor BC dalam kalangan pelajar Melayu dan jawapan yang salah dalam ujian dianalisis dengan kerangka model *grammatical description*. Soal selidik digunakan untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor pengaruh dan ia dianalisis dengan kaedah SPSS. Kemudian temu bual dijalankan di atas satu kumpulan fokus. Hasil kajian dari ujian menunjukkan prestasi pelajar adalah sederhana manakala soal selidik menunjukkan faktor-faktor pengaruh meliputi pemindahan bahasa ibunda, motivasi, masa pembelajaran dan lain-lain. Namun itu, hasil kajian dari temu bual menunjukkan senario percanggahan pendapat dalam kalangan pelajar. Secara optimis, kajian ini dapat menghasilkan garis panduan kepada para akademik untuk penambahbaikan pembelajaran BC dalam kalangan pelajar Melayu.

Kata kunci: *pembelajaran Bahasa Cina, frasa nombor Bahasa Cina, pembinaan frasa, Bahasa kedua*