

NU Writing Talks | April 24, 2021

Genre and Agency in Graduate Writing



GENERAL RESOURCE: <https://wac.colostate.edu/> (open-access)


Books (incl. textbooks), journals, news, and other resources about writing across disciplines.

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NUTS AND BOLTS: <https://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/> (Academic Phrasebank, Manchester U)

This online resource draws on John Swales' genre analysis approach (see also Bibliography below). Useful academic phrases and templates.



Academic Phrasebank

Introducing Work	Referring to Sources	Describing Methods	Reporting Results	Discussing Findings	Writing Conclusions
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HOME »

About Academic Phrasebank

GENERAL LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

Being Cautious
Being Critical
Classifying and Listing
Compare and Contrast
Defining Terms
Describing Trends
Describing Quantities
Explaining Causality
Giving Examples
Signalling Transition
Writing about the Past

An enhanced and expanded version of PHRASEBANK is available in PDF or Kindle format:

Theoretical Influences

The Academic Phrasebank largely draws on an approach to analysing academic texts originally pioneered by John Swales in the 1980s. Utilising a genre analysis approach to identify rhetorical patterns in the introductions to research articles, Swales defined a 'move' as a section of text that serves a specific communicative function (Swales, 1981, 1990). This unit of rhetorical analysis is used as one of the main organising sub-categories of the Academic Phrasebank. Swales not only identified commonly-used moves in article introductions, but he was interested in showing the kind of language which was used to achieve the communicative purpose of each move. Much of this language was phraseological in nature.

The resource also draws upon psycholinguistic insights into how language is learnt and produced. It is now accepted that much of the language we use is phraseological in nature; that it is acquired, stored and retrieved as pre-formulated constructions (Bolinger, 1976; Pawley and Syder, 1983). These insights began to be supported empirically as computer technology permitted the identification of recurrent phraseological patterns in very large corpora of spoken and written English using specialised software (e.g. Sinclair, 1991). Phrasebank recognises that there is an important phraseological dimension to academic language and attempts to make examples of this explicit.

Sources of the phrases

The phrases in this resource have been taken from authentic academic sources. The original corpus from which the phrases were 'harvested' consisted of 100 postgraduate dissertations completed at the University of Manchester. However, phrases from academic articles drawn from a broad spectrum of disciplines have also been, and continue to be, incorporated.

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