

FED Lunch Research Series

Disciplinary Influences on Academic Discourse

Date & Time: 4 November 2015, 13:00 – 14:00 (Light lunch begins at 12:30pm)

Venue: Room G021, Faculty of Education (E33)

Language: English

Audience: UM Staff / Postgraduate Students

Enquiries & Registration: Mr. Alan CHANG (FED_Event@umac.mo); Tel: 8822-4109

** Complementary light lunch will be provided.*

Abstract

Members of an academic discipline share deep-seated epistemological assumptions. These assumptions undergird various disciplinary practices, including “the distinctive ways disciplines have of asking questions, addressing a literature, criticizing ideas, and presenting arguments” (Hyland, 2011, p.12). Put simply, a discipline’s epistemology shapes its rhetorical practices. Thus, researchers of scholarly writing are interested in uncovering systematic disciplinary variations in academic discourse, and students entering into a discipline need to appreciate and master such discursal variations if they hope to be accepted into their disciplinary community. In this talk, I start by outlining, in broad terms, the relationship between disciplinarity and academic discourse. Drawing on Basil Bernstein’s work on knowledge structures in disciplinary inquiry and Karl Maton’s realist sociology of knowledge construction, I discuss how dominant knowledge-knower structures found in different disciplines may shape the rhetorical and discourse strategies used by members of these disciplines in academic communication. I then present the findings of several recently completed studies on cross-disciplinary differences in various aspects of academic discourse and rhetorical practices and relate these findings to disciplinary epistemology and knowledge making practices. By way of conclusion, I discuss pedagogical implications that follow from the findings of these studies and propose pedagogical strategies for socializing students into the academic discourse of their chosen disciplines.

Speaker

Prof. Guangwei HU is an associate professor in the English Language and Literature Academic Group, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His current research interests include academic discourse/literacy, bilingual education, language policy, and second language writing. He has published extensively on these topics in such international journals as *English for Specific Purposes*, *Higher Education*, *Instructional Science*, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *Language Learning*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Review of Educational Research*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *TESOL Quarterly*, and *Teachers College Record*. His most recent co-edited book is *Principles and Practices for Teaching English as an International Language* (2012, Routledge). He is an associate editor of *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* to be published by Wiley-Blackwell.

