JUSTINA ONG

National University of Singapore, Singapore

TEACHING WRITING USING GENRE-BASED APPROACH

Abstract:

Drawing upon Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics (SFL), this paper offers a genre-based approach to analyzing two advertising texts and focuses on the deconstruction of the texts using Feez's (1998) teaching-learning cycle. The main aims of this paper are to raise second or foreign language learners' awareness of the functional use of language in achieving a social and communicative purpose of persuasion for authentic advertising texts and to offer language teachers a few practical suggestions for modelling and deconstruction of comparable texts through thinking-aloud. For these purposes, I used Text 1 which describes Kaikoura and Text 2 which describes Blue Mountain. In terms of ideational function, Text 1 had generalized lexes that are of everyday domain, unlike Text 2 which had more semi-technical lexes. As Text 1 foregrounded the activities one could do there, the processes were mainly material and mental ones. However, Text 2 foregrounded the features of the place; as such, the processes were predominantly relational ones. Text 1 had a more varied use of mental processes than Text 2. In terms of interpersonal function, the writer of Text 1, through the choice of language use, attempted to build a more intimate relationship with the readers compared to the writer of Text 2. Text 1 had a greater diversity of mood choice - e.g., modulated interrogatives and imperatives. The ranges invited a more imaginary dialogic interaction between the writer of Text 1 and its readers. The above text deconstruction via a think-aloud approach shows language learners how text producers achieve the social purpose of persuasion through their choice of language features and offers language teachers a few suggestions for modelling comparable texts in classrooms. Implications of the genre-based approach to teaching writing to Asian learners are discussed.

Keywords:

language; teaching and learning; genre-based approach; writing research