A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF DISSERTATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND STUDENTS' COMPLAINT LETTERS IN CAMEROON ENGLISH

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OUTLINE

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- **Contribution to research in academic writing**
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Introduction

- **Scope**: 200 acknowledgements accompanying MA dissertation and 100 students' complaint letters (hereinafter, DAs and SCLs) from some major state university faculties in Cameroon in six disciplines.

- **Focus:** rhetorical patterns, lexico-grammatical and semantic features, socio-cultural features and politeness strategies.

- **Results:** more or less lengthy texts and expression of gratitude in a limited number of ways, and to a vast variety of individuals depending on the discipline.

The genre theory

- The genre theory as developed by Bhatia (1993; 1997; 2002; 2004) and other related theorists.

✓ factors influencing genre construction: content, form, intended audience and medium or channel.

✓ different types of genre portray "constraints on allowable contributors in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value"

- ✓ Genre analysis is a theory that accounts for the study of language in specific contexts.
- ✓ Contributors to genre analysis: purpose, products, practice and players

The politeness theory in terms of:

✓ Grice's (1989) maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner,

✓ Leech's(1983) maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy and

✓ Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of face.

Literature review

- Hyland (2004)
- Hyland & Tse (2004)
- Nkemleke (2004)
- Nkemleke (2006)
- Karakas (2010)
- Al- Ali (2010)
- Mingwei & Jiang (2010)

methodology

- Corpus-200 DAs and 100 SCLs from six disciplines in some renowned state university faculties in Cameroon
- ✓ Humanities- English language and literature
- ✓ Social sciences-history and economics
- ✓ Hard sciences-medicine and chemistry or biology
- analysis will be corpus-based
- Results will be presented on frequency tables and comparisons and generalizations will be made

Projected findings

Rhetorical patterns in DAs

- Step 1: opening
- Step 2: presenting participants
- Step 3: Thanking God
- Step 4: Thanking supervisor
- Step 5: Thanking other lecturers
- Step 6: thanking family members
- Step 7 : thanking for access to material
- Step 8: Thanking for proof-reading
- Step 9: Thanking for moral support
- Step 10: Thanking informants
- Step 11: Thanking for technical assistance
- Step 12: invoking and promising to share good results
- Step 13: Accepting responsibility
- Step14: making an excuse
- Step 15: closing

Rhetorical patterns in SCLs

- Step1: title- which captures the problem in one statement
- Step2: opening—an introductory statement to the whole text
- Step3: stating the problem—
- Step4: explaining the problem
- Step5: proposing a solution
- Step6: announcing expectation
- Step7: promising positive if problem is solved
- Step9: closing
- Step10: signing off

lexico-grammatical and semantic features

Lexico-grammatical features in DAs

- Noun phrases

- Verb phrases

- Adjectival phrases

Lexico-grammatical features in SCLs

- Perceptive verbs

- Suggestive nouns

Semantic features in DAs

- Simple thanking
- Complex thanking strategies

Politeness in DAs and SCLs

- Elements of politeness with close reference the Grician maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner
- Elements of politeness with reference to Leech's maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy
- elements of face-saving or face-threatening acts
- elements of hedging

Socio-cultural identities in DAs and SCLs

- The definition of 'society' and 'family' with close reference to Nkemleke (2006)

- Academic identification and a construction of personality

Contribution to research in academic writing

- Reveal for the first time the organization of DAs and SCLs in Cameroon English

- Reveal how the politeness strategies in DAs and SCLs can enhance or threaten face in the Cameroonian society

- Act as the first comparative study in the analysis of DAs and SCLs across disciplines in CamE

- Raise awareness on the importance of the genre

CONCLUSION

- Cameroon English therefore maintains a peculiar place in the outer circle

Thanks for your attention and comments which will help this study take a beautiful shape