Derailed Discourse in Instructional Milieu: Discourse Mode Obscurity in the Development of English Instruction Materials and Tasks for ESP

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Abstract: *The use of English these days has been ubiquitous as the language is used in omnifarious contexts. That has resulted in the emergence of specific natures of English bound to context in which it is used. This specificity comprises of various aspects of communicative language ability, one of which is discourse typicality. When coupled with instructional concerns, discourse typicality has to be made obvious in every part of classroom orchestra and materials. This study took issues with scrutinizing the discourse appropriateness of tasks and materials included in ESP textbook devoted to university students. The research operationalized the framework of communicative language ability to address the research question. The research found that the textbook, in large part, had yet to involve genre, rhetorical task, interlocutor variable, and pattern of exposition specific to students' future communicative language ability.*

Keywords*: communicative language ability, discourse typicality, ESP.*

INTRODUCTION

The ubiquity of English these days has evoked myriads undertakings devoted to designing copious English instructions. This is not surprising after all in as much as English has been spoken throughout the globe, promulgating its supremacy as the global language. Universally spoken in abundant areas, English has been annexed with a great number of attributes, encompassing social, political, cultural, educational, economic, and professional contexts. Each of those overriding attributes lends itself to conjuring specific English instructions: there are particularities in universality. As regards specific English instructions, there has been plethora of initiatives seeking to design specific English instructions particularly in the realm of EFL or ESL. In relation to the educational and professional milieu, the mushrooming of English has been promulgated by the increasing number of ESP programs at universities. In fact, this has been extensively echoed at faculty level. Of the most prominent rationale is the proliferation of English has been corroborated by the seemingly universal requirement in English commands entrenched in both educational and professional trajectory. Regardless of the very nature of particular education or profession, to some great extent, English will be one of the stipulated requirements career or educational odyssey.

With respect to the magnitude of English across numerous contexts of communication, there will always some overriding criteria which lend themselves to tailoring the very profile of English coupled with situational communicative competence. Consequently, in order to function effectively in certain context, the exigency of familiarity with the so called *language situatedness* is highly imperious. The tailoring undertaking is apparently multi-faceted in as much as language consists of a number of components. Svaile-Troike (2006) asserts that communicative competence, in social perspective, pervades not

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only vocabulary, phonology, morphology, syntax, or any other linguistic components, but also when to speak or not to, what to say to whom in a certain context, and how it is said appropriately. Further, it is also pertinent to the social and cultural knowledge with which a language learner is to be familiar in order to effectively use and interpret the target language. In this vein, the emergence of ESP is envisaged to be the outcome of differing historical, political, educational, professional, and social events. As explicated by Hutchinson and Waters (1987:6), ESP is not a planned enterprise, nor is it lucid and coherent movement, yet it is more of a phenomenon that is propelled by copious converging trends. This is apparently corroborated by the mushrooming interest of applied linguistics in grappling with the analysis of texts and genres in their *situationality* (Basthomi, 2012).

It is blatantly obvious that the world of linguistics has gone through a kind of revolution. Soraya (2012:7) points out that the traditional linguists aim at investigating the features of language while the revolutionary spearhead in linguistics deploy a more situational perspective in versing the ways language is spoken in copious communication contexts. In the same wave length, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) elucidate that there has been one influential revolution in the ways spoken and written English vary. It is believed that, as the abovementioned notion, the variant of English at play will jibe with the context in which the very language is operative. Pertinent to the context-stipulated use of English, the appropriation of English instruction becomes imperious.

The finale of the contributing reason to the emergence of ESP pertains to a more psychological facet. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) put forward that every learner has their own distinctive strategy in learning. They further that there has been more attention given to the ways through which learner acquires language and the multiplicity in the ways language is acquired. Learners are believed to deploy different learning strategies, operate different skills, and motivated by disparate interests and needs. All in all, taking into account students' needs and motivation is as paramount as is pondering the appropriate particular teaching strategies and materials. This saliently points out the emergence of numerous ESP programs in Indonesian universities. At the University of Muhammadyah Malang, for instance, there are a great number of ESP classes. The ESP class is taken as one of the graduation requirements, clearly manifesting its supremacy in the educational enterprise and, for sure, professional trajectory.

As regards the notion of situationality in language use and, of course, language learning, ESP has manifested the robust and elaborate allusion to discourse analysis. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:18) highlight that there is a form of typicality of particular context of language use. The sense of typicality, to my best perusing, denotes a continuum. It is a relative construct rather than a dichotomous one, say typical and not typical. ESP, in its magnitude particularities, makes explicit the typicality of communication milieu with which particular students are going to jibe. It is this typicality of ESP that lends itself to deploying the works of discourse analysts. Referring to Gee (1999:12), "Discourses" with a capital "D," that is, different ways in which we humans integrate language with non-language "stuff," such as different ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing, and using symbols, tools, and objects in the right places and at the right times so as to enact and recognize different identities and activities, give the material world certain meanings, distribute social goods in a certain way, make certain sorts of meaningful connections in our

experience, and privilege certain symbol systems and ways of knowing over others. This very notion on Discourse, grappling with the operationalization of symbols in context to create meaningful connections, is deemed to play crucial role in the edifice of language domains; speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

The multimodality of language exerts a great number of text types and genres. The text types and genres, in instructional context, are going to vary extensively, dependent on the language context that students are going to encounter. Analyzing the profile of certain language context in order to determine what counts in certain ESP program is what discourse analysis takes issues with. Discourse analysis provides the tools by which instructors are enabled to particularize the potential what-counts part and integrate it in their teaching program. In other words, discourse analysis prevents language instructors, as well as those holding the stakes in developing language instruction program, syllabus, and instructional materials, from derailing the instructional trajectories.

This piece of writing is devoted to scrutinizing one textbook designed for students in pharmaceutical program at the University of Muhammadyah Malang. This book encompasses three language modalities, *inter alia*, speaking, writing and reading. Specifically, this work grapples with investigating the typicality of the language tasks and materials included in the writing, from discourse analysis spectacles. Writing skill, being performance-based in nature, is chosen in as much as it can delineate how conversant students are in deploying their communicative competence effectively and hone them to create personal meaning (Sweet, Reed, Lentz, and Alcaya, 2000:3). They further point out that performance-based assessment provides language learner with meaning-saturated context serving as the arena for real language use. The task and material are contrived and organized germane to certain theme, devoted to grounding the students in context. It is this context that conjures the role and interaction with which students are to keep abreast. The allusion to creating meaning and in taking part in certain communication context denotes the prominent has robust connection with the work of discourse analysis. This is the focal crux backgrounding scrutinizing the instructional arsenal at issue. Responding to the findings, the paper also strives to bestow a model of designing materials and tasks from the very perspective.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present work, being a small-scale research, is intended to study the quality of the performance-based tasks designed in *English for Pharmacy*, an ESP textbook designed for the students in pharmaceutical program, with respect to the operationalized discourse-bound property. On this ground, the study is carried out through evaluative case study. Yin (2003:28) puts forward that evaluative case study entails thick description, explanation, and judgment. Yin furthers that the very study is appropriate for evaluative purpose since it is grounded, provides holistic meaning, and illuminates tacit knowledge. Bound to evaluative purpose, this work makes some allusions to, assumedly, prominent theorizations germane to communicative competence and, as entailed in communicative competence, discourse competence. The theoretical ground will serve as the gatekeeper against which the materials and tasks are scrutinized.

Revisiting Communicative Competence

The very notion pertaining to language use in ESP, Particularities in Universality, has brought in the realm of communicative competence plethora of typicality of contexts and, as a corollary, myriads of situationality-based language use. Regardless of the typicality of language use and context, communicative competence, as Canale and Swain (cited in Bagarić, 2007) assert, denotes the edifice pertinent to a four-facet competence. Hereunder is the divide of the communicative competence as explicated by Canale and Swain:

a. Grammatical/linguistic competence, which includes knowledge of the lexicon, syntax and semantics (mastery of language codes).
b. Sociolinguistic competence, concerned with the appropriateness of communication depending on the context including the participants and the rules for interaction.
c. Strategic competence, a set of strategies devised for effective communication and put into use when communication breaks down (grammatical and sociolinguistic strategies).
d. Discourse competence, which is concerned with the cohesion and coherence of utterances/sentences.

The spearhead notion of communicative competence by Canale and Swain is, assumedly, rather lame in addressing the crux of real communication in which context, register, and addressee are omnipresent for their notion has yet to ponder how the discrete components concomitantly function to pave effective communication. In the same wavelength, Council of Europe also relinquishes, to some extent, similar explication germane to the divide of communicative competence. The figure underneath delineates the very divide:
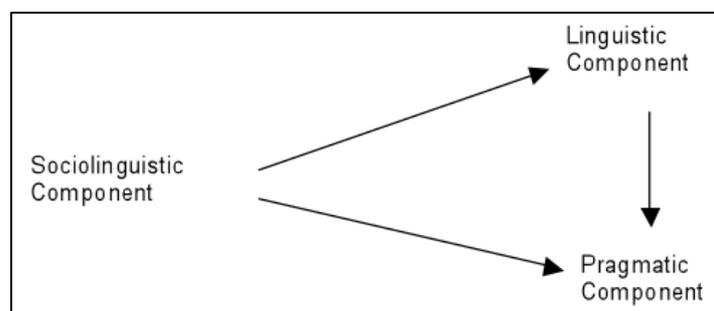

The Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Language (2001:123) puts forward that communicative competence constitutes the triangular interconnectedness. Adding in another facet in communicative competence, pragmatic competence, the Council of Europe promulgates pragmatic competence, which is pertinent to the user or learner's knowledge of the principium referring to which messages are: a) organized, structured, and arranged (discourse competence); b) used to perform communicative functions (functional competence); c) sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata (design competence).

Slightly alluding to the milieu of communicative competence, discourse mode, as asserted by Weir in his socio-cognitive framework, encompasses genre, rhetorical task, pattern of exposition, and addressee. With regard to the previous explication, it is, thus, manifest that discourse competence grapples with the language users or learners' conversancy in creating and harmonizing coherent strands of meaning and forms embedded

in language to fit particular context. Any shift in the discourse mode will exert specific and patterned change in the profile of discourse competence. Discourse competence, as explained by the Council of Europe, is implied to pervade the followings:

- Thematic organization;
- Coherence and cohesion;
- Logical ordering;
- Style and register;
- Rhetorical effectiveness;
- The 'co-operative principle'
- Text design, which deals with the knowledge of the design conventions in the community

None, however, of the aforementioned notions, has made clear explication regarding the interconnection of the four language skills, which are, to some varied extent, concomitantly operative in a real communication and context-driven communication in pedagogical context. In response to the discreteness of the former notion on communicative competence, it is deemed apt to take into account a more interactional framework of communicative competence, that proposed by Alcón (cited in Belmonte and McCabe, 2004). Hereunder is the model of communicative competence proposed by Alcón.

DISCOURSE COMPETENCE		
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	TEXTUAL COMPETENCE	PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

PSYCHOMOTOR SKILLS			
WRITING	SPEAKING	LISTENING	READING

STRATEGIC COMPETENCE	
COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES	LEARNING STRATEGIES
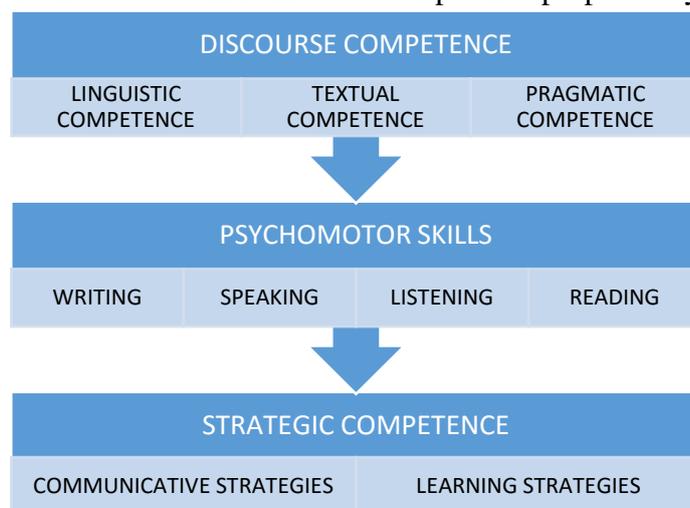
According to Alcón, discourse competence is of superior role in communicative competence in as much as it takes issues with the context of communication with which every single competence is to comply. In her framework, discourse competence serves the reciprocity of the four language skills. The strategic competence is operative in the reciprocity among or between skills and is operationalized in communicative strategies and learning strategies. From pedagogical perspective, Alcón's concept fits teaching-learning context than are the former ones in as much as her concept ponders the reciprocity of the four language skills as well as the nature of language learning. Grappling with the concept of specificity in communicative competence, by operationalizing discourse-driven communicative competence, it is envisaged that the honed communication praxis in

instructional milieu be sensitive to situationality embedded in contextual factors, such as addressee, register, and norms of convention and interactions.

Discourse Competence in ESP Writing Instruction: Jibing with Disciplinary Specificity

In the educational enterprise, writing has been deemed as a kind of quandary for both instructors and language learners. This is not surprising after all since this skill necessitates, in a way, sharper eyes on the part of both instructors and learners, particularly due to the imperiously necessitated competence in particularizing the context as well as the goal of piece of writing at hand. Without the luminous light of contextual attributes, any outcomes of writing instruction will be vacuous for it has yet to address any specific communicative context.

In keeping up with the notion of communicative context, Weir proposes the socio-cognitive framework in designing language task. This notion propagates that language skill does not merely operationalize executive resources and executive processing, but also calls for a designated context in which the language is operative. The exigency of context, in this case, is congenial with the concept of specificity in the realm of ESP teaching wherein every effort devoted to instruction has to keep abreast with specific context. Bound to the notion of ESP, Hyland asserts that there is high specificity in both spoken and written exercise across different ESP programs. Specificity, in Hyland's proposition, grapples with the ways through which people communicate as members of social groups and that different groups use language to conduct their business, define their boundaries, and manage their interactions in particular ways.

To some great extent, grappling with discourse competence in ESP context has robust allusion to disciplinary specificity. Particularly in EAP, Hyland mentions that the idea of discipline has become important in EAP for academics have become more sensitive to the ways through which genres are written and responded by individuals or parties acting as members of social groups. In keeping with the notion of recognition, as elucidated in Gee's work, disciplines are construed as language using communities having the power to interconnection among writers, texts, and readers. Communities bestow the context within which we learn to communicate and to conceive each other's talk. This context-bound learning boosts language learner in acquiring the specialized discourse competencies to participate as group members, which is, in a way, tantamount to the notion of recognition work. Within written discourse, thus, we can see disciplines as particular ways of composing particular piece of writing which specifically jibes with the community to which our writing is intended. It is in scrutinizing the disciplinary-based specificity that discourse competence plays fundamental role.

Of the most prominent importance is that discourse competence bestows the liberty to language learner, particularly those in ESP program, to scrutinize the communicative context which is disciplinary-embedded in nature. Huckin (2002), in this light, puts forward that by fostering students to hone their discourse competence, teachers, students, scholars, and others are engaged in composition enterprise. He furthers that those involved gain the benefit of being able to analyze written texts and discursive practices in ways encouraging them to address and take the *right action* in important social issues. In essence, discourse-based approach to teaching writing nudges language learners to be language analyst as well as

ethnographer in as much as they are exposed to and encouraged to pore the nature of certain piece of writing embedded in its culture.

Discourse Mode: A Scrutinizing Framework

Referring to the typicality of communicative competence, determining the discourse mode in designing instructional materials and tasks cannot be taken lightly for any obscurity and misfire may result in erroneous or even paradoxical internalization of discourse competence. In other words, the communicative purpose being addressed will robustly dictate the profile of discourse mode. As the interconnectedness is omnifarious, it is important to ensure that the discourse mode operationalized in certain instructional materials as well as tasks be designed in a way directly and clearly keeping abreast with communicative competence at issue. In this mini research, the discourse mode is at play in the evaluative framework operative in scrutinizing the materials and tasks in the aforementioned textbook. As the spearhead of the evaluative framework, the notion of written discourse mode as proposed by Weir is called for. He elucidates that discourse mode entails:

a) Genre, which deals with the expected form and communicative function of the written product, e.g. letter, invitation, brochure, and so forth.
b) Rhetorical task, encompassing traditional discourse modes of narration, description, explanation, discussion, and the like.
c) Patterns of exposition, referring to the subcategories of exposition or specific instruction to test takers, such as making comparison, outlining causes and effects, and so on.
d) Interlocutor variables in written language: addressee, which is influential in scaffolding the content and the nature of the text as well.

As an effort to excel the abovementioned framework, it is deemed beneficial to couple the former with the one proposed by Belnomente and McCabe (2004). In their concept, there are five criteria in analyzing the discourse attributes in instructional materials. The first three criteria are germane to context, readers, and text structuring. The context deals with the forms of writing, such as letter and invitation, which is congruent with the concept of genre proposed by Weir. The criteria regarding readers takes into account to recipient to which the piece of writing is dedicated, ostensibly addressee in Weir's work. Meanwhile, the text structuring focuses on different text types and how they are composed, ostensibly the rhetorical task Weir's discourse mode. This criterion deals with two levels of text structuring. The first level, macro level, takes issues with the modeling of text in terms of text types, e.g. narrative, descriptive, and argumentative. The other one is micro level. This alludes to the idea linker in paragraph or, in grammatical term, conjunction. The fourth criteria in Belnomente and McCabe's work deals with the linguistics choices, particularly the style of writing, i.e., formal and informal. Lastly, they propose the other concept of linguistic choices which construe the field. This takes issues with providing the right words to fit the context of writing at issue. In brief, the framework at work in versing the specificity of the materials and tasks in the book is described as following:
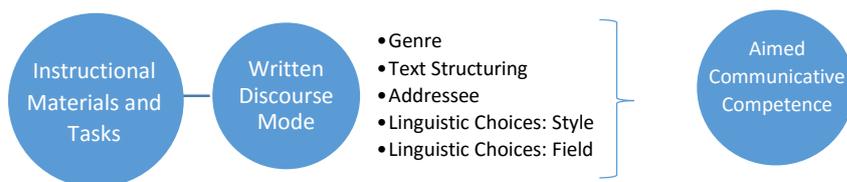
In accord with the framework, the instructional materials and tasks in every unit will be atomized with respect to the discourse mode embedded. The profile of the discourse mode at play will then be analyzed in terms of its specificity in jibing with the aimed communicative competence.

FINDINGS

Having scrutinized the very book, this section is specifically devoted to elucidating the profile of the tasks with respect the profile of discourse mode activated in every unit. On the whole, the book under scrutiny had yet to make specific nor had it deliberately operationalized discourse mode in keeping abreast with the ultimate objective of the program to which the book was designed. Referring to the foreword section of the book, it was found out that the book was specifically contrived to help the students in pharmaceutical program to master communicative English in their specificity. This very objective, however, was highly unlikely to be accommodated by the book at issue. What follows constitutes the profile of the tasks designed in the book.

Learning Objective (writing)	Genre	Text Structuring		Addressee	Language Choice: Style	Language Choice: Field
		Macro Level	**Micro Level**			
Using to be and verb in past	CV	Descriptive text	none	friend	None	none
Writing one day schedule	Schedule	none	none	none	None	none
Writing complaint letter	Complaint letter	none	none	none	Formal	none
Being able to recognize symptoms	none	none	none	none	None	None
Writing personal letters to media and writing	Letter	none	none	none	None	none

Learning Objective (writing)	Genre	Text Structuring		Addressee	Language Choice: Style	Language Choice: Field
		Macro Level	**Micro Level**			
response letter						
Understanding the use of comparison	none	none	Contrast	none	None	none
Writing procedures based on pictures	Medical instruction	procedure	Time signal	none	None	none
Writing prescription based	Prescription	none	none	none	None	none
Describing drug labels into descriptive text	none	Descriptive text	none	none	None	none
Writing the reasons supporting a certain preference	none	none	none	none	None	none
Writing a memo	Memo	none	none	Employee	None	none
Making request letter	Letter	none	none	News reader	None	none
Getting information through interview and elaborating it in a paragraph	none	none	none	none	None	none
Interpreting a chart	none	none	Time signal	none	None	none
Writing opinion	none	none	Cause-effect	none	None	none

Learning Objective (writing)	Genre	Text Structuring		Addressee	Language Choice: Style	Language Choice: Field
		Macro Level	Micro Level			
about cases						
Writing greeting cards	Greeting cards	none	none	none	None	Expression of sympathy
Writing formal business emails	Order Letter	none	none	none	None	none
Making a correction from text	none	none	none	none	None	none
Writing process based on chart	none	Descriptive text	none	none	None	none
Creating poster about health	none	none	none	none	None	none
Making a brochure	Brochure	none	none	none	None	none
Filling out the form	Job application	none	none	none	None	none
Writing job application letter	Job application	none	none	none	Formal	none
Writing profile based on picture	Company profile	none	none	none	None	none
Writing short biography	Biography	Descriptive	none	none	None	none
Writing CV	CV	none	none	none	None	none

With respect to the first criteria of discourse mode, genre, it was found out that, in large part, the book had not addressed various genres to keep up with the, assumed, students' needs in their both educational and professional trajectories. Of the total number of the units included, only fifteen units included specific portion for genres. The ones operationalized encompassed, curriculum vitae, letter, complaint letter, memo, prescription, brochure,

company profile, job application, and greeting cards. The other units did not address any genres at all. Most of these rather vacuous units merely took issues with writing paragraphs and filling blanks.

The second criteria, text structuring, was divided into two levels, macro level and micro level. The scrutiny touched on, firstly, the macro level. Within the milieu of macro level, as the aforementioned finding, little had been taken into account to focus on text types. There were only two text types found. These were germane to procedure text and descriptive text. The former one was evident in unit seven, projected to hone students' competence in composing procedure text based on picture. The latter one was included in one, nine, nineteen, and twenty five. Unit one was devoted to practicing students' mastery in contriving curriculum vitae. The subsequent unit encompassing descriptive text was focused upon describing drug labels. Descriptive text was also operative in unit nineteen, aiming at writing process based on a chart. Lastly, the very text type was also at work in unit twenty five, coping with honing the conversancy in writing biography. This rather dry profile was also discovered at the more micro level text structuring, which entailed the discussion regarding ideas-linking. Of twenty five units included, there were only three units that mad explicit entailment to conjunction. The types of conjunction taken into account were pertinent to contrast, time signal, and cause effect.

Thirdly, the scrutiny also unearthed that the consideration regarding the interlocutor variable in writing, addressee, was rather obscure throughout units. Hardly ever did the units make any allusion to operationalizing specific addressee in the writing tasks. There were only three units which made available the explication pertaining to addressee. The first addressee-entailing unit was the unit one, focusing on writing curriculum vitae. The work in this unit was intended to friend as the recipient of the piece of writing. The other one was aimed at practicing students in writing memo, in which employee was addressed. Lastly, there was also one unit focusing on making request letter, wherein students were required to compose their writing to news reader.

The fourth criteria, linguistic choice which construed style or mode of politeness, was also rather poorly activated throughout units. As the abovementioned criteria, the book hardly covered any discussion on expression of formality or informality. In fact, there were only a couple of units alluding to this facet of discourse mode. The one dealt with was germane to formal expression. Students were bestowed the exemplification of the designated expressions, which had to be applied in the subsequent section of the unit.

Lastly, when dealing with the linguistic choice which construed field disciplinary diction, it was unearthed that there was only a single unit which addressed students' attention to the realm of specific diction choice. This was evident when coping with the discussion on composing greeting card. As stipulated by the objective, students were given the specific expressions commonly spot on business cards, such expressions as *with deepest sympathy, with heartfelt condolences,* and *our thoughts and prayers are with you.*

DISCUSSION

Referring to the findings of the study, there are some points which are noteworthy. This part of the study grapples with the interpretation of the data aggregated. In addition to the interpreting undertaking, this section, subsequent to the interpretation, will also strive to

seek the implication of the findings on the nature of teaching-learning endeavor with respect to discourse competence.

The first point deals with the very profile of the discourse mode of the tasks. With respect to the exigency to provide crystal-clear context within which the art work of writing is at play, it is envisaged that students will be left in the dark. There are some grounds on this premise. First is that the allusion to addressee and situational context have yet to be provided. This downright impacts the entirety of writing business, blatantly detrimental in nature, in that students have no idea of how they should typify their writing in terms of content and style. The other thing is that students are given no insights into the realm of formality or informality. Albeit the book included the exemplification of formal expression, this appears somewhat obscure in as much as students are not given the exemplification of the opposing style, informal one.

The other corollary of the discourse mode obscurity is that this will have robust impact in the versatility of piece of writing that students are able to produce. At first, this may be convincingly addressed to the fact that there were only a few units that included discussion on genres. A more discourse-based cause is that students are not encouraged to internalize the typicality of certain art of writing. Albeit some units made available the use of example of generic structure and text type, these appeared restrictive for students were given the template of genre or text type being learnt and then they were assigned to provide the missing part thereof.

From pedagogical perspective, it is also obvious that any inference made based on the tasks is of low validity. The most prominent reason is, for sure, the obscurity of the discourse mode present. Without clear context serving as the arena to grapple with the discourse essentials, it is then arduous to construe how conversant students are in appropriating their writing with certain milieu of communication. This is of course something attributed to high stakes in professional milieu. The learning outcomes, desired communicative competence, are downright next to impossible to procure. In addition, it is also absurd to monitor students' language development as there are only a few opportunities which can inform how well students contextualize their writing within certain situation.

Finally, the allusion of discourse to culture-specific communication also emerges another serious downside. Since there has been found to be myriads of segregation of language and culture throughout the units, students are not going to be able to, especially in professional realm, procure their community membership. Oftentimes, community-driven genre serve as the gatekeeper of community membership typifying. When the specificity has yet to be operative in the teaching and learning undertakings, it is then very hard to define that *ESP* does refer to *ESP*.

CONCLUSION

From both academic and professional spectacles, it is obvious that the book has yet to accommodate the aspired communicative competence specific to English in the designated discipline. Discourse analysis approach to teaching has the potential to bestow the nudge to both students and teachers to evaluate how specific their intended communicative competence. Especially in the realm of ESP, discourse analysis has a much more imperious role in as much as there are more demands to typify the nature of teaching and learning

enterprise. This typicality plays crucial role in informing the students about the culturally community-based writing with which students are to jibe, which possesses even higher stakes in the forthcoming professional trajectory.

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