

# **What can the British Academic Written English corpus do for you?**

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# Paper Outline

- 1. Overview of the project
- 2. Some initial findings
- 3. Future uses of the BAWE corpus

# BAWE

An investigation of genres of assessed writing in British higher education

- Funded by the ESRC: project number RES-000-23-0800

# BASE and BAWE

- BASE is about 2½ million words
- BAWE will be about 15 million words (we hope!)

Tribble (1997:3)

- My own view is that the most useful corpus for learners of English is the one which offers a collection of *expert performances* (Bazerman 1994:131) in genres which have relevance to the needs and interests of the learners. Collections of relevant expert performances will exemplify the results of the desired forms of language behaviour that learners are trying to achieve.

# BASE sampling grid (= 160):

discipline event	AH	LS	PS	SS
lectures	40	40	40	40
seminars	10	10	10	10

# BAWE sampling grid (about 3000)

subject \ year	AH	LS	PS	SS
1st	32x6	32x6	32x6	32x6
2nd	32x6	32x6	32x6	32x6
3rd	32x6	32x6	32x6	32x6
4th	32x6	32x6	32x6	32x6

# BAWE disciplinary grid

University / Discipline	Warwick	Reading	Brookes
HA	History Philosophy Theatre Studies	Archaeology Classics Linguistics	English History of Art
LS	Biological Sciences Medicine Psychology	Agriculture Food Science & Technology Zoology	Health & Social Care
PS	Engineering Mathematics Physics	Construction Cybernetics Meteorology	Computing Planning
SS	Economics Law Sociology	Business Geography Politics	Anthropology Hospitality & Tourism

# Three research strands

- 1. Insights from the discourse community
- 2. Multidimensional analysis
- 3. SFL genre analysis



# From the discourse community

- a. Department documentation
- b. Tutor and student interviews & surveys
- c. Student submission forms

# Tutor interview questions

- What role does assignment writing play in your department?
- What different types of written assignment do you set your students?
- What are the main differences between these types?
- In what ways does student writing progress?
- What do you value / dislike in student writing?

# Contextual information (1)

Student (unique code)

Gender M,F

First Language Eng, Ger, Fre ...

UK Education UKA, OSA, UK1, UK2, ..

Course BA English Studies, BSc Maths

# Contextual information (2)

- Assignment (unique code)
- Title (text)
- Date written (year-month) 2002-2, 2004-5, ..
- Level (of student) 1,2,3,3\*,4,4\*
- Module title Critical Theory, ...
- Module code EN3001, ...
- Assignment Type Essay, Report, ...
- JACS Code A, E, D ...
- Disciplinary Grouping AH, LS, PS, SS
- Grade M(erit), D(istinction)
- Authors 1,2,3,...

# The variety of genres: an example from Engineering

- Essays
- Site investigation reports (both factual and interpretative)
- Laboratory reports
- Project reports
- Reflective journals
- Posters
- Summaries of analysis + recommendations
- Funding proposals
- Business plans

# What can the BAWE do for you?

- Published findings
- Corpus data for your research
- A searchable interface