



Teaching Digital Genres: Between Conventions and Hybridization

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Abstract

Traditional genre-based approaches to foreign language teaching depart from the social nature of textual production, reception and interpretation, both written and oral (Johns 2002, Paltridge 1994, Swales 1990). They therefore combine linguistic analysis with an analysis of the socio-cultural practices of particular discourse communities. With the advent of digital or web genres like emails, blogs, webpages, and wikis the form-function relationship had to be extended through the notion of functionality. User interactions with the technologically mediated texts and the affordances these offer, has lead to a greater hybridity in these genres than in traditional ones. Moreover, discourse communities themselves are increasingly heterogeneous and therefore socio-cultural practices, conventions and values associated with particular textual practices become increasingly mixed. At the same time, though, digital genres build upon and include traditional conventions which students have to be familiar with.

The presentation will focus on a genre approach to teaching foreign languages that includes and highlights local adaptations and hybridizations and is thus capable of overcoming preconceived and static notions of what people usually do and mean when they read and write. The proposed framework generates an understanding of how particular people in particular circumstances use discursive and generic resources to advance specific purposes and thereby furthers intercultural understanding.