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Disciplinary differences in social science and physical science BASE lecture introductions

Listening to lectures can be problematic due not only to the demands of real-time processing of information, but also the non-homogenous nature of lectures compared to other academic genres (Thompson 1994). Lecturers can mitigate the potential problem faced by listeners through the use of rhetorical functions to structure their lectures. Building on Thompson(1994)'s model of generic moves of lecture introductions, this study identifies the disciplinary differences in functions and sub-functions and their linguistic realisations in 20 social science lectures and 15 physical science lectures from the BASE corpus*. This study uses a combination of genre analysis and corpus analysis to investigate the differences. The possible applications of findings include helping international students understand university lectures and encouraging lecturers to become more listener friendly.

References:

Thompson, S. (1994). "Frameworks and contexts: A genre-based approach to analysing lecture introductions." *English for Specific Purposes* 13(2): 171-186.

*The recordings and transcriptions used in this study come from the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus. The corpus was developed at the Universities of Warwick and Reading under the directorship of Hilary Nesi and Paul Thompson. Corpus development was assisted by funding from BALEAP, EURALEX, the British Academy and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.