

ABSTRACT

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Ethnoculturally Marked Genres of the American and British Academic Administrative Discourse

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Background:

The focus of the present research is the features of the administrative academic discourse (AAD) by which we understand the discourse of academic administrators (AA) or university leaders. The administrative corps of a university, possessing huge powers and the ability to solve critical problems, appears to be a part of the country's governing elite, as they participate in the regulation of issues in the field of education. A contemporary AA is a chief administrator of the university responsible for what is happening in the higher educational institution; a person formulating the mission, values, and strategy of the university, and is distinguished by high intellectual, linguo-creative regulatory abilities, therefore, a comprehensive study of the AA discourse is suggested to be a relevant direction.

The purpose of the present research is to classify AAD genres and highlight culturally marked genres in the contemporary American and British academic subculture.

Methods:

The empirical base of the study includes more than 4.000 oral, written, and video speeches (over 100 hours) found on the official websites of universities including publications on social networks such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook authored by AA of the leading American and British higher educational institutions. The proposed classification of AAD genres is based on a set of oppositions distinguishing between oral and written, traditional and innovative, epideictic and non-epideictic genres including formal parameters of the genres, such as formal-pragmatic and formal-technical ones.

Results:

In American AAD unique genres are considered to be the following: In the subsystem of oral epideictic genres in American ADD, in contrast to its British parallel, there are traditional speeches addressed to the freshmen and in particular graduates of reserve officers of the US Armed Forces. Oral meditative genres in American AAD include religious and liturgical speeches, e.g. speeches by university presidents in a university chapel in connection with honoring graduates (Baccalaureate Address) or speeches during the church service (Prayers Address). The primary epideictic written genre is represented in American

AAD by panegyrics praising university professors, consistent appeals to alumni with gratitude for the financial support of the university as well as appeals to various government agencies or senior government officials criticizing their decisions. Along with the innovative written electronic genre Twitter publications that are common to the compared systems, the presidents of American universities actively practice personal and interactive micro-publications on Facebook and Instagram.

Among the genre variety of British AAD that is not represented in its US counterpart subsystem, are the following: In the system of oral epideictic genres, along with the Inaugural solemn speeches of the stepping up Vice-Chancellor acting as the chief administrator and academic leader, Inaugural Lectures (Inaugural Lunch Hour Lecture) including aspects of university further development are featured. There are no analogues in the American AA culture in the system of oral popular science genre for Radio speeches (lectures, interviews) performed by the heads of British universities. Socio-political oral genres, including speeches of British university leaders in the national Parliament, are inherent in British AAD. In the epistolary genre the leaders of British universities regularly publish letters and messages dedicated to the beginning or end of the school year as well as to inform the staff about the decisions taken on the issues of pay and compensation package, social and political situation related to Brexit, and other matters.

Conclusions:

On the whole, the AAD in American and British academic subcultures has been proved to have a fairly extensive palette of genres – oral and written, traditional and innovative, epideictic and non-epideictic, interactive and non-interactive, along with ethnoculturally marked genres, such as Baccalaureate Addresses and religious Prayers Addresses found in the American academic AAD, and speeches in the national Parliament and Radio speeches marking the British academic tradition, denoting the well-balanced, dynamically developing communicative academic subculture aimed at creating a positive image of the university they represent, promoting its achievements, and highlighting its noble humanitarian mission.

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