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## THE USE OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN DESIGNING A READING SYLLABUS FOR ECONOMICS STUDENTS

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## Abstract

The intention of this study was to analyze selected chapters from Higher Secondary Economics textbooks and Bachelor of Science in Economics textbooks written in English by different authors and published in India. This study also intended to design a reading syllabus for Economics students on the basis of discourse analysis.

More specifically, the present study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the discourse characteristics of the selected chapters from four Economics textbooks used in India by Higher Secondary students and Bachelor of Science major in Economics students based on a rhetorical approach?
  - 1.1 What are the dominant objectives of the total discourse of the four Economics textbook chapters?
  - 1.2 What are the dominant general rhetorical functions that developed the total discourse of the four Economics textbook chapters?



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1.3 What are the dominant specific rhetorical functions that developed the general rhetorical functions of the four Economics textbook chapters?

1.4 What are the dominant rhetorical technique that developed the specific rhetorical functions of the four Economics textbook chapters?

2. Based on the results of the rhetorical analysis, what type of syllabus will be appropriate in order to develop the reading skills of Bachelor of Science in Economics students?

In this analysis, four chapters (one chapter each) from four different Economics textbooks were analyzed following Louis Trimble's rhetorical process chart (1985). Following this rhetorical process chart, each chapter was divided into four levels for analysis. On the first level of analysis, the total discourse which covered the first to the last paragraphs of the chapter was analyzed to identify the objective of the total discourse. On the second level of analysis 60% of the physical paragraphs of each chapter were taken for analysis. The



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attempt on this second level of analysis was to identify the general rhetorical functions that develop the objectives of level A. Then, on the third level C, an attempt was made to identify the specific rhetorical functions that developed the general rhetorical functions of level B based on the conceptual paragraphs (from the same 60% of the physical paragraphs). On the fourth level D, an attempt was made to identify the rhetorical techniques that were used by the authors to provide the relationships within and between the rhetorical units of level C (from the same conceptual paragraphs which were also used in level C). After the analysis of the first level A, 60% of the physical paragraphs was used for the analysis of levels B, C, and D.

From the text analysis many interesting characteristics and rhetorical functions have been found. The rhetorical features on four levels do exist in Economics discourse. Level A, the writer's main objective is to present theory; on level B, this theory is presented to discuss different concepts and methods for calculating national income; on level C, these concepts and calculating methods are specified through definition, classification, partition, indirect instructions and visual-



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verbal relationships; on level D, among the rhetorical functions of definition and classification, partition or analysis, indirect instructions are developed mostly by the rhetorical techniques of causality and result, time-order and process order. This type of discourse organization frequently occurs in the Economics textbooks chapters. The analysis revealed that many specific language signals are used for different rhetorical techniques. It is difficult to predict the particular rhetorical functions of Economics discourse. Sometimes, different rhetorical techniques are juxtaposed to develop one rhetorical function.

However, in most of the cases, visual-verbal relationships are presented by illustration. It has been observed that indirect instructions are used rather than indirect instructions. Specific rhetorical functions of indirect instructions and process description are developed by the rhetorical techniques of causality and result, time order and process order.

The text analysis of the Higher Secondary Economics textbook chapters and Bachelor of Science in Economics textbook chapters revealed many similarities between the



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two levels of rhetorical functions and rhetorical techniques. It is interesting to note that most of the definitions are developed in the framework of causality and result. That is, as definition is the most dominant rhetorical function, causality and result is also the dominant rhetorical technique.

On the basis of the rhetorical functions of Economics discourse identified, a reading syllabus was designed for Bachelor of Science in Economics students of India.

