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KEYNOTE TALK

Discursive Performance in Academic and Professional Legal Contexts

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ABSTRACT

Discourse as performance is almost inseparable from law in all its contexts, whether academic or professional. Analysis of legal discourse has focused largely on the 'discursive practices' of legal academics, lawyers in practice, legislative draftsmen, and specialists in forensic linguistics with a focus on discursive output, written or spoken. In more recent years, some attention has been paid to the discursive practices of international commercial arbitrators. However, very little effort has been invested in studying 'critical performance' in professional legal and arbitration practices as distinct from discursive practice. In this presentation I would like to develop some of the critical aspects of genre theory to study 'discursive performance' as a resource for the study of legal practice in all its manifestations, drawing on the notion of *interdiscursivity* in *critical genre theory* (Bhatia, 2004, 2008, 2010) in order to demystify discursive performance in legal and arbitration practice.

REFERENCES

Bhatia, Vijay K., (2004): *Worlds of Written Discourse: A Genre-Based View*, London, Continuum.

Bhatia, Vijay K., (2008): Genre Analysis, ESP and Professional Practice, *English for Specific Purposes*, 27, [161-74]

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ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Vijay Bhatia has recently retired as a Visiting Professor from the Department of English, and currently holds adjunct professorship in Macquarie University, Australia, and in University of Malay, Kuala Lumpur. He is the founding President of the LSP and Professional Communication Association for the Asia-Pacific Rim. He has been in the teaching profession for 46 years. Before joining the City University in 1993, he worked at the National University of Singapore (1983-1993). Some of his recent research projects include *Analyzing Genre-bending in Corporate Disclosure Documents*, and *International Arbitration Practice: A Discourse Analytical Study*, in which he leads research teams from more than 20 countries. His research interests are: Genre Analysis of academic and professional discourses, including, legal, business, newspaper, advertising, genres; ESP and Professional Communication; simplification of legal and other public documents; cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary variations in professional genres. He has to his credit more than a hundred publications, which include journal articles, books chapters, edited volumes, and individually written books. Two of his books, *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings* and *Worlds of Written Discourse: A Genre-based View*, are widely used in genre theory and practice.

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS:

Vijay K. Bhatia,
E-mail: vjkbhatia1@gmail.com