What can the British Academic
Written English corpus do for
you?

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Paper Outline

• 1. Overview of the project
• 2. Some initial findings
• 3. Future uses of the BAWE corpus
BAWE

An investigation of genres of assessed writing in British higher education

• Funded by the ESRC: project number RES-000-23-0800
BASE and BAWE

- BASE is about 2½ million words
- BAWE will be about 15 million words (we hope!)

Tribble (1997:3)

- My own view is that the most useful corpus for learners of English is the one which offers a collection of *expert performances* (Bazerman 1994:131) in genres which have relevance to the needs and interests of the learners. Collections of relevant expert performances will exemplify the results of the desired forms of language behaviour that learners are trying to achieve.
BASE sampling grid (= 160):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>discipline</th>
<th>AH</th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>SS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lectures</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seminars</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**BAWE sampling grid (about 3000)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>year</th>
<th>subject</th>
<th>AH</th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>SS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td></td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
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<td>2nd</td>
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<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td></td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td></td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
<td>32x6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## BAWE disciplinary grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Warwick</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Brookes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>History of Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theatre Studies</td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Health &amp; Social Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Food Science &amp; Technology</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Zoology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Computing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Cybernetics</td>
<td>Planning</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Meteorology</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Anthropology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Politics</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three research strands

• 1. Insights from the discourse community

• 2. Multidimensional analysis

• 3. SFL genre analysis
From the discourse community

a. Department documentation

b. Tutor and student interviews & surveys

c. Student submission forms
Tutor interview questions

• What role does assignment writing play in your department?

• What different types of written assignment do you set your students?

• What are the main differences between these types?

• In what ways does student writing progress?

• What do you value / dislike in student writing?
Contextual information (1)

Student (unique code)
Gender M,F
First Language Eng, Ger, Fre ...
UK Education UKA, OSA, UK1, UK2, ..
Course BA English Studies, BSc Maths
Contextual information (2)

- Assignment (unique code)
- Title (text)
- Date written (year-month) 2002-2, 2004-5, ..
- Level (of student) 1,2,3,3*,4,4*
- Module title Critical Theory, ...
- Module code EN3001, ...
- Assignment Type Essay, Report, ...
- JACS Code A, E, D ...
- Disciplinary Grouping AH, LS, PS, SS
- Grade M(erit), D(istinction)
- Authors 1,2,3,...
The variety of genres: an example from Engineering

- Essays
- Site investigation reports (both factual and interpretative)
- Laboratory reports
- Project reports
- Reflective journals
- Posters
- Summaries of analysis + recommendations
- Funding proposals
- Business plans
What can the BAWE do for you?

• Published findings

• Corpus data for your research

• A searchable interface