

“Researching language as a meaning-making resource in the Offshore Outsourcing Industry in the Philippines”

Abstract:

Today, many of the back office work, administrative tasks, customer service and other operations of multinational companies have been offshored and outsourced (O&O) to developing countries such as the Philippines. The range and variety of work found in the O&O industry is extremely varied from customer service telephone support (call centers), to medical transcription, animation work for movies, accounting, etc. In the Philippines and other destinations, the language for O&O work is predominantly English. Additionally, In the Philippines, English is a key resource leading to employment; and a lack of enough talented proficient English speakers is a major hurdle for further development. In this new emerging form of discourse, little is known about the language as a meaning-making resource in customer service interactions. In this paper, I outline discourse analytical and lexicogrammatical research I have been involved with in the O&O industry in the Philippines.

I discuss and highlight some of the research which has taken place, specifically focusing on text analysis, at both a discourse semantic and lexicogrammatical level. I draw on data from transcribed calls, field notes from over ten visits to different Business Processing Outsourcing organisations, and interviews with approximately 30 different Customer Service Representatives (CSR). I apply a systemic functional linguistic theoretical model (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), including Appraisal analysis (Martin & White, 2005), to investigate how meanings are made in the transcribed calls. The findings from the text analysis highlight the ways in which each speaker contributes to the dynamic and dialogic features of the call centre interaction. I also highlight and explore a range of lexicogrammatical features that emerge from the data, as salient and key meaning-making resources. Based on the findings from field notes and interviews, I illustrate how this industry directly impacts the social lives of those working within the industry. In this paper, I conclude by discussing the value and implications of the findings and outline areas of research that need further attention within the industry in the Philippines.



About the Speaker :

Dr Gail Forey is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU). Her research interests are systemic functional linguistics, critical discourse analysis, English for specific purposes and language education. She has taught and researched in England, Australia, Japan and Hong Kong. She has recently co-edited two books *Text type and Texture* with Geoff Thompson (2009, London: Equinox) and *Globalisation, Communication and the Workplace* with Jane Lockwood (2010, London: Continuum).



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by

Dr. Gail Forey

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hong Kong, SAR China
2012 Professorial Chair Holder

“Researching language as a meaning- making resource in the Offshore Outsourcing Industry in the Philippines “

Saturday, 4 February 2012, 3-5 p.m.
Gonzalez Lecture Room A1403
De La Salle University – Manila



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PROGRAM

I. Philippine National Anthem Ms. Mylene Manalansan
LSP Member

II. Opening Prayer Dr. Eduardo Bolanos
LSP Board Member

III. Welcome Remarks Dr. Danilo T. Dayag
LSP Immediate Past
President

**IV. Tribute to Dr. Sibayan
Montealegre** Dr. Ma. Antoinette
LSP Board Member

V. Introduction of the Speaker Dr. Shirley N. Dita
LSP Secretary

VI. Lecture
**“Researching language as
a meaning-making resource
in the Offshore Outsourcing
Industry in the Philippines”**
Dr. Gail Forey
The Hong Kong Polytecnic
University

VII. Open Forum

VIII. Closing Remarks Dr. Rochelle G. Lucas
LSP Vice President

Ms. Ruth Alido, Emcee