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Forging a link between research and pedagogy: A holistic framework for evaluating business English materials

Clarice S.C. Chan

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Abstract

In the last two decades, a great deal of applied linguistics research has been conducted in different areas of business English. However, despite many highly relevant research findings, the interface between research and pedagogy remains weak. One reason behind this lack of interface is that research findings from different studies are rarely brought together in an accessible manner for use by business English practitioners. The present paper proposes a model for linking research and pedagogy in business English, whereby applied linguistics research findings are channelled to pedagogical practice through a holistic framework for evaluating teaching materials. This evaluative framework entails research findings related to both pedagogical considerations and the discourse of the business English topic of interest. Using business meetings as an example, the paper demonstrates how a two-part checklist for evaluating materials on the topic can be

developed by using the framework. In addition, through an evaluation of textbook materials on meetings by means of the checklist, the paper illustrates the sort of gap which might not have been obvious had traditional checklists been used. It is suggested that checklists incorporating research findings should be developed for other business English topics to strengthen the link between research and the evaluation, development and use of materials.



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Clarice Chan is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at the University of Hong Kong. She has BBA and MSc degrees in business and economics, and worked in multi-cultural settings in business before starting an academic career. She has also taken an MA degree in Applied Linguistics at the University of Birmingham. She is currently the coordinator of English courses for business undergraduates at the University of Hong Kong, where she also teaches discourse analysis to postgraduates. She holds the IATEFL BESIG Award for the Development of Business English Teaching Materials for 2007.

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