



**Martin Harper**  
**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**  
**From purpose to objective**



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# **BUSINESS COMMUNICATION FROM PURPOSE TO OBJECTIVE**

**BY MARTIN HARPER**



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## PREFACE

In universities across Europe, English is now a compulsory subject in many faculties besides Modern Languages. As a result, students of Economics, Law and Banking, for example, often find themselves struggling with a foreign tongue that they have never studied or were glad to leave behind at high school. This poses a problem for English teachers in higher education: how do they enable students with no particular linguistic ability to achieve a level of communicative competence in English that will allow them to function effectively in the world of work ? In *Business Communication: from Purpose to Objective*, I explain how Genre Analysis, the approach pioneered by John Swales and V.K. Bhatia in the 1990's, may be used to teach writing for professional purposes and how it can also be adapted to cover spoken texts, such as telephone calls. I start from Swales' basic conception of a 'genre' as a goal-directed communicative event with a specific purpose and a distinctive schematic structure, explaining how the latter may be analysed into component units known as 'Moves' which, together and in sequence, realise each genre's communicative purpose. I then discuss some applications of Genre Analysis to commercial correspondence and outline my own alternative view. Finally, I present a model for teaching Business Communication which combines this approach with Task Based Language Teaching, Register Analysis and selected Process Writing techniques. I conclude by suggesting that this variation of Register and Genre Analysis facilitates the writer's progress from purpose to objective and enables students to produce written and spoken texts which are clear and simple, precise and concise: the hallmarks of effective Business Communication.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martin Harper was born in Cambridge and taught EFL in the UK, Italy and Indonesia before joining the University of Macerata in 1992. He currently teaches at the Economics faculty and at SSML San Pellegrino, a school for translators and interpreters in Misano Adriatico. He has written about Indonesia for various journals and newspapers and, while he was there, appeared regularly in an English teaching TV series on the TPI channel. His present field of interest is English for Professional Purposes and he has recently devised a number of multimedia CD-ROM's in the series *English for Training and Mobility* for the European Community's Leonardo da Vinci II Pilot Project.

## Martin Harper BUSINESS COMMUNICATION From purpose to objective

All across Europe, teachers of English in higher education face a perennial problem: how do they help undergraduates with no particular talent for foreign languages achieve a level of communicative competence in English that will allow them to function effectively in the world of work ?

Business Communication: from Purpose to Objective explains how Genre Analysis, the approach pioneered by John Swales and V.K. Bhatia in the 1990's, can be combined with Task Based Language Teaching, Register Analysis and selected Process Writing techniques to teach writing for professional purposes, and how it can be adapted to cover spoken texts, such as telephone calls. This groundbreaking method facilitates the students' progress from purpose to objective, enabling them to produce written and spoken texts which are clear and simple, precise and concise: the hallmarks of effective Business Communication.

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