**Genre Analysis of Iranian Companies Replies to Foreign Customers’ Inquiry Emails**

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**Abstract**

English language as an important means of international communication has received an undeniable role in international business communications around the world. In this respect, in an attempt to find the distinguishing features of different texts many studies have been carried out with a focus on the analysis of different written genres in EBP (English for Business Purposes). Studies of this type can be considered as the starting point for the purpose of teaching, as such an approach to teaching can be useful in exposing learners to the authentic use of English. However, there are few studies that have examined the genre of electronic mail, especially as used in business communications. This descriptive study involves a genre analysis of e-mails written by Iranian companies in reply to inquiries sent via e-mail by foreign customers in the English language and compares the results with similar studies on alternative English users such as Dutch and American and studies on related genres such as letters of negotiation. The process of genre analysis conducted on our corpus was based on Swales’ (1990) ‘move’ and ‘step’ framework and five moves were identified in the genre. The implications of the study regarding the stance of e-communication among Iranian companies and also relevant implications for language teaching are further discussed.

**Keywords:** *Business English; Inquiry e-mail; Genre analysis*