



**RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES – 2013/2014
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

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Dr Paul Thompson is the Director of the Centre for Corpus Research at the University of Birmingham. His main research interests are in academic and other specialised discourses, in uses of educational technologies in language learning, and in the exploitation of corpus resources and methodologies in learning about language. He worked with Hilary Nesi on the development of the British Academic Spoken English and British Academic Written English corpora, and he is currently working with Susan Hunston on a project called 'Investigating interdisciplinary research discourse: the case of Global Environmental Change', funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC Reference: ES/K007300/1). He is a co-editor of the Journal of English for Academic Purposes.

Seminar Title: Investigating the discourse of interdisciplinary research

Abstract

Academic disciplines are sometimes described as using 'different languages'. An economist might use very different language from a biologist, for example. But what happens when these researchers publish in journals aimed at interdisciplinary audiences? And what happens as interdisciplinary fields, such as Environmental Studies, emerge? Looking at the language involved may reveal a lot about how disciplines can work together to solve the world's problems.

In this talk I will report on the first stages of an ESRC funded project carried out at the Centre for Corpus Research, in collaboration with the publisher Elsevier, in which we investigate the discourse of a successful journal in an interdisciplinary field: Global Environmental Change. Our aims are to study the extent to which this field operates as a unified whole, the extent to which journal authors in the field broaden their messages to a multidisciplinary audience, and the extent to which each discipline in the field maintains a discrete identity.