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1. Introduction

This study analyzes a corporation's business policy on its Web site by utilizing the notion of genre.

Today various information about a corporation is provided and updated on its Web site. Miyata (2007) states that public relations through the Internet has enabled a corporation not only to publicize various information but also to convey its identity on its Web site. He also mentions that a corporate Web site can have various classifications on the Internet, so it can keep varied communication spaces such as Web pages for its products and for customers who are highly interested in its activities (Miyata: 2007: 151).

This study analyzes the Web pages of a corporation's business policies, examines the information shown and clarifies the corporation's communication strategy.

2. Methodology

2.1 Definitions of genre and its identification

Swales defines genre as "a class of communicative events" that has "some shared set of communicative purposes (Swales 1990: 45-46). Miller (1984)'s definition is "a particular type of discourse classification, a classification based in rhetorical practice and consequently open rather than closed and organized around situated actions" (Miller 1984: 155), while Bakhtin (1986) states that thematic contents, styles, and compositional structures are inseparably linked to the whole of the utterance and that *relatively stable*

types of these utterances may be called *speech genres*¹ (Bakhtin 1986: 60). Therefore, a genre can be said to have shared and conventional purposes and forms. Yates and Orlikowski (1992), admitting this definition of genre, note that genres are recognized in forms of organizational communication, such as letters, memoranda, or meetings (Yates and Orlikowski 1992: 300). Eggins and Martin (1997) regard social purposes as another factor in distinguishing genres, stating that genres are “different ways of using languages to achieve different culturally established tasks”(Eggins and Martin 1997: 236).

Based on the genre definitions stated above and utilizing other scholars’ studies on genres in linguistics and rhetoric, Fairclough (2003) examines social practices with the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. He himself defines genres as “ways of acting and interacting discursively” and distinguishes genres according to meanings in actions and varied measures for discourse form (Fairclough 2003: 34-35). Fairclough (2003) analyzed “a promotional feature” in a newspaper from the viewpoint of action meanings and forms of text, and found the mixing of “a journalistic feature article genre,” “a corporate advertising genre,” and “a tourist brochure genre.” He points out that such genre mixing and the incorporation of “a corporate advertising genre” into the social practice of the local authority shows its anticipation of practice of business (Fairclough 2003:35).

The present study, analyzing genres from Fairclough (2003)’s CDA approach, aims to clarify what kind of strategy is used in the Web pages and what kind of social practices are achieved as a result. Factors in Eggins and Martin (1997) are also utilized in order to distinguish different genres; these factors are vocabulary, transitivity, logic-semantic relations, modality, thematic position and reference.

¹ Italics are in the original.

2.2 Hybridity of genres in the data

Fairclough (2003) classifies genres into pre-genres, disembedded genres, and situated genres based on their level of abstraction (Fairclough 2003: 68-70). Pre-genres “transcend particular networks of social practices,” disembedded genres are “lifted out of particular networks of social practices,” and situated genres are “specific to particular networks of practices” (Fairclough 2003: 68-69). Fairclough’s pre-genres are based on Swales (1990), who defines them as “areas of verbal activity that are considered to lie outside genres” (Swales 1990: 58). Casual conversation or ‘chat’ and ‘ordinary’² narrative are two examples of Swales (1990)’s pre-genres, and specific types of interaction or specific types of narrative are developed from respective pre-genres and into genres (Swales 1990: 59-61).

The present study’s data is from the Web site of Japan Tobacco International (JTI). JTI is a multinational company established in 1999 after Japan Tobacco Inc. purchased R.J. Reynolds. JTI currently has more than 27,000 employees who belong to more than 100 different nationalities, and it operates in 120 nations³.

The data is the entire text of “Smoking and health,” which is one of the items under “How we do business” on JTI’s Web site. The page “Smoking and health” has six categories in the company’s business policy which follow “Our position on:”

Our positions on

- Active smoking
- Addiction
- Environmental tobacco smoke
- Tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide (TNCO) pack prints

² Single quotations are in the original.

³ These pieces of information of JTI is based on the company’s Web page entitled “our company” updated in 2013. (<http://www.jti.com/our-company/jti-at-a-glance/> received January 9, 2015.)

- Reduced-risk products
- Snus

For example, “Active smoking” reports on what kind of opinion/stance the company takes on active smoking when they do business. Therefore, we can say that these six links respectively report on the company’s specific business policy in terms of smoking and health.

Thus, we can expect that the whole text of “How we do business” is of a business report genre, the whole text of “Smoking and health” is of a business report genre on smoking and health, and the six texts under “Our position on” are of a business report genre on smoking and health with focus on respective points, such as active smoking. These genres may be called situation genres (Fairclough 2003) or subgenres (Yates and Orlikowski 1992)⁴. Besides these, we may have other kinds of genres if the texts have different purposes than reporting on business. In that case we have a mixing of genres as we have seen in Fairclough (2003)’s study in 2.1.

The present study will analyze these texts to examine whether genres are mixed, and if so, how they are mixed, and to see what kind of social practices are undertaken in the Web pages.

3. Previous studies

Rutherford (2005) analyzes the words used in the U.K. OFR (Operating and Financial Review) utilizing genre theory and corpus linguistics. He has found differences in the frequency of words and rhetorical techniques used, and identified the power of the Pollyanna effect in the texts, especially in those of low-profit companies.

Yates and Orlikowski (1992) examines genres, media, and their influences on organizational communication. They clarify definitions of genres and a

⁴ Yates and Orlikowski (1992) suggest “subgenres,” which have a lower level of abstraction than that genres do. They add that the level of abstraction is a relative one (Yates and Orlikowski 1992: 303-304).

concept of subgenres in communication within communities. They discuss relations between genres and the media, showing the influence of new media such as electronic mail on existing genres. They also discuss genres as powerful instruments in carrying ideologies and cultures and in impression management, and state the necessity of empirical studies of genres.

Crowston and Williams (2000) examine 1000 Web pages by categorizing the genre types that are represented in the text. They studied how such a new media as the World Wide Web (WWW) affects existing communicative genres, and found that these genres have been reproduced or adapted to the new media and that new genres have emerged. Crowston and Williams (2000) suggest a long-term study of the WWW based on the current results of the updating and reproduction of genres.

Lastly, we will look at two genre studies from Fairclough (2010): one is on university prospectuses (Fairclough 2010: 113-125), and the other is on a political television program (Fairclough 2010: 146-159).

The former study deals with historical changes in the prospectus genre of Lancaster University undergraduate prospectuses for the years 1967-8, 1986-7, and 1993. Analyses of words, modality, and agency have allowed us to see that contemporary prospectuses contain elements of an advertising genre as well as of a university prospectus genre. Thus, shifts in social practice by university prospectuses have been clarified through their genre changes.

The latter study examines genres of a political discussion in a television program on the 1992 British General Election campaign. It identifies a chat genre and a political interview genre as well as a genre mixing of these two, through an analysis of process types and conversation management. It finds that the genre mixing changed identities and knowledge in the text and caused a shift in dominance in the political order of discourse.

These studies show the effectiveness in generic analysis of social practices. The present study will also examine genres in the texts, and in this case, texts of the Web pages. Crowston and Williams (2000) state that it is not

the “difference in physical forms such as whether it is a brochure or a flyer” but the “purpose of the information” that distinguishes genre in Web pages (Crowston and Williams 2000: 200). In their classification of Web pages, they detect a homepage (first page of a corporate Web site) genre when the Web page has the purpose of introducing a corporation and promoting communication between the corporation and its clients. We will identify genres in JTI’s Web pages under the link “How we do business,” and find out the corporation’s communication strategy.

4. Analysis

The present study examines JTI’s Web pages utilizing Fairclough (2003)’s genre concept and aims to discover what activities proceed in the text. In addition, as stated in 2.1, factors in Eggins and Martin (1997) will be used for identifying genres.

We will analyze the two paragraphs following “Smoking and health” first, and the texts of the six categories listed in 2.2.

The numbers in parentheses ((1), (2). . .) indicate serial numbers of the data, and the encircled numbers (①, ② . . .) are paragraph numbers.

(1) Smoking and health

① JTI recognizes that cigarettes are a legal but controversial product. People smoke for pleasure but there are real risks that come with that pleasure. Accordingly JTI believes that tobacco products should be appropriately regulated.

② JTI also believes in the freedom of adults to choose whether they want to smoke and that no one should smoke unless he or she understands the risks of doing so. These risks distinguish tobacco from most consumer goods and they place upon the industry a real responsibility. It’s a responsibility for which JTI expects to be held accountable, together with governments and the rest of society.

We have two lead paragraphs under the title “Smoking and health.”

In the first paragraph, in the first and the third sentence, JTI fills the thematic positions and conveys its own ideas and opinions with a mental process: The first sentence expresses the company's understanding that cigarettes are controversial and the third sentence states that JTI is convinced of the necessity of appropriate regulation for cigarettes.

At the point of the connection of clauses, the first and second sentences consist of coordinate clauses. That is, in the first sentence, the insistence that cigarettes (its products) are legal parallels the insistence that the products are controversial. Regarding the company's insistence, “legal” shows positive and objective value, while “controversial” indicates that a complicated situation exists around the products. And the company “recognizes” such a situation. The second sentence with “people” in the thematic position describes our real-life activity and enjoyment, while the real risk is objectively shown. The third sentence clearly conveys the company's opinion with modality, expressed by “should,” following the first sentence's recognition of status-quo and the second sentence's demonstration of the fact. Therefore, we have an assertion genre in the first and third sentences and a report genre in the second sentence. The assertion with a solid fact reported can make a strong legitimization as the company's communication strategy.

In the second paragraph, by having “JTI” in the thematic position, the company shows its conviction about the freedom of smoking by adults in general as well as their concern about people's health in general.

In the second sentence, the company refers to the government and the society, and their being accountable for their responsibility. JTI does not take a thematic position, but objectivity strongly makes its assertion (the responsibility of government and society).

JTI's strategy is to insist legitimacy in the assertion genre that it knows its own products well, that it does not deny the products' risks, and that not only

JTI but also the society and the government are responsible for making these risks known to people.

(2) Active smoking

① Smoking is a cause of serious diseases including lung cancer, coronary heart disease, emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

② This conclusion has been drawn from studies which, taken as a whole, show that smokers are at a greater risk of developing these diseases compared to non-smokers and that stopping smoking reduces this risk over time.

③ While smoking is a cause of these diseases among smokers, there are other risk factors for the individual smoker, including lifestyle, occupation, environment and genetic pre-disposition. All relevant risk factors need to be taken into consideration when investigating the cause or causes of a disease in any smoker.

④ If you want to avoid the risks of smoking, you should not smoke.

We see concepts have thematic prominence, such as “Smoking” (①), “This conclusion,” “stopping smoking” (②), “Smoking” and “All relevant risk factors” (③), and several technical terms for diseases used in the first and third paragraphs. These paragraphs convey scientific information about the risk of smoking and the relation between smoking and disease, but no specific individuals or organizations present this. On the contrary, the passiveness in the sentences objectively explains the risk of smoking and investigates smokers’ diseases. Therefore, we can say they use a scientific report genre.

In the last paragraph, however, “you” is put in the thematic position, and it is used to also refer to prospective smokers. The term “you” means readers of the Web pages, so using “you” here is a practice of “synthetic personalization” (Fairclough: 2001:52) as we usually see in advertisements. Moreover, the verb “want” increases informality and the only modal auxiliary

verb in this text, “should,” appeals to readers. Thus, we can conclude that this last sentence uses an advertisement genre.

(3) Addiction

① Many smokers report difficulty quitting smoking. The reasons they offer vary. Some say they miss the pleasure they derive from smoking. Others complain of feeling irritable or anxious. Others speak simply of the difficulty of breaking a well-ingrained habit. Given the way in which many people – including smokers – use the term ‘addiction,’ smoking is addictive.

② But no matter how smoking is described, people can stop smoking if they are determined to do so. No one should believe that they are so attached or ‘addicted’ to smoking that they cannot quit.

③ Over the past decades, millions of people – all over the world – have given up smoking. Most have done so by themselves. Recent studies have shown that the majority of ex-smokers have quit without treatment programs or other assistance. Other former smokers have used the many smoking cessation products or programs that are available.

In the first paragraph, non-specific people (“many smokers,” “some,” and “others”) are in the thematic position, which shows that difficulty in giving up smoking is a common opinion. The mental process verb, “miss” and “feeling irritable or anxious” express the pain of quitting smoking as well as the enjoyment of smoking.

Such difficulty and painfulness in giving up smoking as expressed by ordinary people are simply denied in the second paragraph. The thematic prominence given to ordinary people (“people,” “no one”) and the use of modal auxiliary verbs (“can,” “should”) make the denial a strong one.

The third paragraph suggests real instances of successfully giving up smoking with ordinary people in the thematic position. They are emphasized in numbers (“millions of people,” “all over the world,” “most” and “the

majority of ex-smokers”), which appeals to the practicability of abandoning smoking.

Thus, JTI is not in a thematic position or referred to in the text, so this section on addiction seems to present information about addiction in smoking, that is, it seems to be of a social report genre. However, the strong assertion in the second paragraph by the denial of mental appeal in the first paragraph and the definite result of the success of giving up smoking in the third paragraph create an assertion genre which may be effective in persuading readers.

(4) Environmental tobacco smoke

① Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS – also known as second-hand smoke) is a mixture of the smoke that drifts from the burning end of a cigarette between puffs and the exhaled smoke from smokers nearby.

② In poorly ventilated areas, ETS can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat. It may also worsen childhood respiratory tract infections, as well as some childhood respiratory conditions such as asthma. Furthermore, a number of studies have linked ETS with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

③ Based on the current science, JTI does not believe the claim has been proven that ETS is a cause of diseases such as lung cancer, coronary heart disease, emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

④ Many people have concerns about exposure to ETS. All smokers should show consideration for those around them. JTI strongly advises against smoking when children are present.

⑤ JTI promotes practical and effective solutions, such as separate smoking and non-smoking areas, which accommodate the legitimate interests of smokers and non-smokers.

The first and second paragraphs put concepts in the thematic position, use

scientific terms such as “exhaled smoke” and “respiratory tract infection,” and describe ETS objectively with the relational process. Thus, we can find scientific report genres in these paragraphs. In addition, the expression of “In poorly ventilated areas” and the modal auxiliary verbs “can” and “may” in the second paragraph indicate JTI’s attitude that ETS is not 100% responsible for disease, which is regarded as JTI’s implicit assertion.

The third paragraph, which puts JTI in the thematic position and uses the mental process verb “believe,” expresses the writer’s assertion about ETS’s causality of disease. So here, we can find an assertion genre. Since the writer’s opinion is “based on the current science,” which means it is an objective opinion derived from scientific evidence, and the information cited includes specific names of diseases, JTI’s opinion can be understood as scientific and persuasive.

The first and second sentences in the fourth paragraph both refer to and give thematic prominence to people through emphatic expressions like “Many people” and “All smokers.” In addition, the second sentence has the modal auxiliary verb “should,” which shows the writer’s attitude about ETS. Thus JTI’s strong concern about ETS is expressed in these sentences as a general opinion. However, the third sentence puts “JTI” in the thematic position and uses the emphatic adverb “strongly,” which explicitly presents the company’s assertion about ETS’s risk and children’s health. In this way, an assertion genre in this paragraph becomes most obvious in the last sentence.

The last paragraph refers and gives thematic prominence to JTI. The verb “promote” is a trigger of presupposition (Levinson 1983, Verschueren 1999) that the act dealt with is something good and valuable. Thus, “practical and effective solutions, such as separate smoking and non-smoking areas” are valued, and JTI is the explicit agent doing a valuable deed. Moreover, the word “legitimate” makes JTI’s act socially more acceptable. Therefore, we can detect an assertion genre through JTI’s advancing socially beneficial actions.

In this section, the risk of ETS is conveyed through a science genre while JTI's tackling the risk of smoking is presented through an assertion genre. We can say this enhances the company's public image since it presents exact facts and shows that the company is making efforts to do what is socially supported.

(5) Tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide (TNCO) pack prints

① Tobacco smoke is a complex mixture and consists of both particulate and gas phases. The particulate phase is comprised of tar, nicotine and water. The gas phase includes carbon monoxide.

② The amounts of tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide (TNCO) produced by a cigarette vary from product to product and depend on how it is smoked. In many countries, legislation requires TNCO smoke yields to be printed on cigarette packs.

③ To determine these TNCO yields, cigarettes are smoked in specially designed machines and the smoke tested for these components, and others, in accordance with validated methods, such as those developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

④ JTI believes that TNCO pack prints can be informative to consumers, allowing them to compare machine-derived TNCO yields between products and to select specific products according to their preference.

⑤ However, TNCO pack prints do not, and were never intended to, indicate the levels of tar, nicotine or carbon monoxide that an individual smoker will inhale. The amount of smoke an individual smoker takes in depends on the way he or she smokes as well as the type of cigarette.

⑥ There is no safe cigarette. Products with lower TNCO pack prints compared to other products are not necessarily any less harmful for the individual smoker.

The first, second and third paragraphs give the most thematic prominence

to tobacco-related materials such as “tobacco smoke” and “the particulate phase.” Using relational process and many terms for scientific materials such as “tar and nicotine,” these paragraphs express scientific report genres. They explain both the ingredients of tobacco smoke and how the amount of TNCO is measured. However, we can see no involvement by people or companies in the description of tobacco smoke, only that TNCO compose the smoke and a machine measures the amount of these. The second sentence in the second paragraph only refers to “legislation” that decides the posting of “TNCO smoke yields on cigarette packs,” and the agent is not made explicit.

The fourth paragraph expresses the company's respect for its clients' freedom of choice with a mental process and modality. This is the company's assertion of its valuing the clients' preference.

In the fifth and last paragraphs, the company continues to seek benefits for the clients through an apparent explanation genre that in fact proves to be an assertion genre. By referring to “individual smoker,” “the way he or she smokes” and “the type of cigarette,” JTI asserts that TNCO amounts for the individual are neither given on the pack prints nor controlled by the company. Moreover, the modality expressed by “are not necessarily any less harmful” in the last sentence calls the clients' attention to the accuracy of information.

Therefore, this section provides the clients with a scientific explanation and makes them sure of the possible risk of tobacco smoke. Its use of assertion genre can be interpreted as self-defense in the corporation's business activity.

(6) Reduced-risk products

① JTI is committed to developing, testing and bringing to market new forms of tobacco products with the potential to reduce the health risks from tobacco use.

② While these risks cannot be completely eliminated, JTI is working to develop reduced-risk products which are acceptable to adult users of tobacco products.

③ For example, work continues to develop products which may reduce health risks, such as those that heat tobacco rather than burn it. JTI also manufactures oral smokeless tobacco products such as ‘snus’, which may be less hazardous to health than many other tobacco products currently available.

④ Overall, JTI believes that:

⑤ It is in the common interest of public authorities and tobacco product manufacturers to make a success of reduced-risk tobacco products that meet consumer expectations. That means allowing adult users of tobacco products to try and evaluate such products, if they wish to do so, once they are appropriately informed about the health risks.

⑥ Public health bodies, regulatory authorities, the scientific community and the tobacco industry should collaborate to develop policies and frameworks for the development and sale of such products.

⑦ JTI is committed to working with public health bodies and regulatory authorities to create the framework that will allow these products to be made available.

The first and second paragraphs, with JTI in the thematic position, assert that the company is carefully developing products with a possibly reduced risk. The first paragraph lets the readers know the company’s attitude toward the products, and the second paragraph expresses that it is really trying to manufacture reduced risk products. Since JTI is asserting its concern for its clients’ health and tastes in these paragraphs, their assertion genre it adopts here can be interpreted as an advertisement genre.

In the third paragraph, the company’s efforts in manufacturing reduced-risk products are reported. On one hand, the modality (“may reduce health risks,” “may be less hazardous to health”) weakens its claim of a the reduced risk, but on the other hand, the company’s strictness shows its trustworthiness.

The paragraph beginning with “Overall” has two kinds of statements after

“believes that,” which create an assertion genre in the Web page.

The first statement (⑤) is an assertion about developing products. By referring to public authorities, tobacco product manufacturers, and consumer expectations, the company asserts that manufacturing reduced-risk products is to meet public demand and is for the benefit of its clients. The JTI's respect for consumers' evaluation for its products and the company's duty to inform of the risk reveals its client-oriented business stance.

The second statement (⑥) asserts the realization of manufacturing reduced-risk products in medical, administrative, and legal areas. By giving equal thematic prominence to the four organizations, JTI insists on collaboration among them.

The last paragraph (⑦) states that the company does not just think about but also will definitely start developing and selling products after monitoring its clients and clearing medical, administrative, and legal regulations. By using the word “available” which means for the benefit of the clients, the company asserts its client-oriented business activity.

(7) Snus

① Snus is an oral smokeless tobacco product traditionally manufactured in Sweden.

② There is no safe tobacco product and snus, like other tobacco products, poses risks to health. But compared to many other tobacco products currently available, scientific evidence strongly suggests that the consumption of snus is less hazardous to health.

③ However, not every country currently allows snus to be sold.

④ JTI therefore believes that:

⑤ Adult consumers who choose to use snus should, once appropriately informed about the health risks, have the opportunity to do so;

⑥ Governments should allow snus and other smokeless tobacco products to be sold, subject to proportionate regulation – including to prevent them

from being used by minors.

⑦ JTI does not make any health claims about snus in its marketing. JTI does not market snus, or any other tobacco product, to minors or to non-users of tobacco products.

The first and second paragraphs objectively states information about a smokeless tobacco products “snus” with thematic prominence given to “snus” and concepts. Especially, the last sentence in the second paragraph emphasizes that snus is less hazardous than other products, but the paragraphs following these show that this fact is not fairly evaluated in the society and state that smokeless tobacco products should be properly marketed, by adopting an assertion genre.

In the third paragraph, JTI criticizes some countries’ decision not to market snus by using “however,” which shows its disagreement.

Then JTI expresses its belief in adult consumers’ right to choose tobacco products and in the government’s responsibility (④⑤⑥). Lastly JTI conveys its assertion about the health risk of snus and the company’s consideration for nonsmokers and minors. By not only calling attention to new products but also explicitly conveying its opinion about marketing and regulations on its Web page, the company shows its sense and consideration.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined genres in the texts of a corporation’s Web pages. We expected to see business report genres on smoking and health, since the texts that are under the subordinate title “How we do business” seemed to report its business activities. However, the analysis has shown a mixing of report genres and assertion genres. In fact there are several cases in which report genres are found in the former part and assertion genres are found in the latter part in a section. The corporation presents facts and research results concerning smoking and health, and then presents its judgement and

opinions about such things as the risk of smoking and social responsibilities, eventually making a strong assertion about these.

Since the texts appear under the expression of "Our positions on," it may not be surprising to find assertion genres there. However, the texts do not only show the corporation's position on smoking and its products but also its arguments and claims concerning the relation between smoking and diseases, the benefit to clients, and the development of new products. The corporation's assertions are presented with persuasiveness following the presentation of solid facts in its reports and with consideration for the clients. Such a social practice can make an effective communication strategy for the corporation that manufactures the "controversial product."

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Data

“Smoking and health”

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