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Linguistic Insights  
Studies in Language and Communication

Carol Berkenkotter, Vijay K. Bhatia &  
Maurizio Gotti (eds)

# Insights into Academic Genres

Peter Lang

This volume presents the latest research of an international group of scholars engaged in the analysis of academic discourse from a genre-oriented perspective. The area covered by this volume is a central one, as in the last few years important developments in research on academic discourse have not only concerned the more traditional genres, but, as well, generic innovations promoted by the new technologies, employed both in the presentation of research results and in their dissemination to a wider community by means of popularising and teaching activities.

These innovations have not only favoured important changes in existing genres and the creation of new ones to meet emerging needs of the academic community, but have also promoted a serious discussion about the construct of genre itself.

The various investigations gathered in this volume provide several examples of the complexity and flexibility of genres, which have shown to be subject to a continuous tension between stability and change as well as between convention and innovation.

**Carol Berkenkotter** is Professor of Rhetoric and Communication at the University of Minnesota. Her current research interests include the influence of digital technology on 'emergent genres' of the Internet, such as blogs, wikis, and Facebook.

**Vijay K. Bhatia** has recently retired as Professor from the City University of Hong Kong. His research interests include applied genre analysis; ESP and Professional Communication; cross-cultural variation in professional discourses.

**Maurizio Gotti** is Professor of English at the University of Bergamo. His main research areas are the features and origins of specialized discourse, English syntax and English lexicography.

# Insights into Academic Genres



# Linguistic Insights

Studies in Language and Communication

Edited by Maurizio Gotti,  
University of Bergamo

Volume 160

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[info@peterlang.com](mailto:info@peterlang.com), [www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com), [www.peterlang.net](http://www.peterlang.net)

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## Introduction

This volume contains selected papers originally presented at the conference on *Genre Variation in English Academic Communication: Emerging Trends and Disciplinary Insights* held in Bergamo on 23-25 June 2011. The aim of the conference was to bring together the latest research of scholars engaged in the analysis of academic discourse from a genre-oriented perspective. The area covered by this volume is a central one for many scholars working in the field of academic discourse, who have demonstrated that genres are highly structured events, motivated by particular communicative purposes and performed by members of specific discourse communities (Swales 1990, 2004; Bhatia 1993, 2004; Berkenkotter/Huckin 1995).

Since its inception, the construct of genre analysis has acquired a privileged status in much of the ongoing research in languages for specific purposes. Its importance is shown by the continued production of numerous important monographs and studies, as the bibliographical references in the chapters of this volume attest. Research on this topic has also become wider and richer with the contribution of different analytical approaches and recent methodological innovations which have enhanced the investigation of both oral and written academic genres.

### 1. Insights into Academic Genres

Academic communication greatly relies on compliance with textual norms governing the construction of its different genres. There is a close link between each type of specialised text and its organisation, which in turn implies correlations between the conceptual, rhetorical

and linguistic features that characterise the text itself. Genre not only provides a conventional framework but also affects textual features and their conceptual and rhetorical development. With time, several text types have arisen – some derived from genres used in the general language, others crafted specifically to meet the needs of specialists. The academic community, as a social entity, has established its own genres and textual rules of interaction for an effective transmission of information among its members and as an effective way of characterising this community as a whole (Martin/Rose 2008). Within this broad academic community, other small communities of practice – the so-called ‘academic tribes’ (Becher 1989) – have defined specific rules of social interaction and interactional procedures strictly linked with their own particular research practices. Moreover, they have codified the varying discourse processes and dialogic conventions relating to the different written/spoken generic formulations typical of the various contexts of their practice (e.g. abstracts, academic lectures, conference presentations, PhD dissertation defences, research articles, seminars, etc.).

Discourse analysts have drawn attention to the concept of genre to gain a better understanding not only of the linguistic characteristics of texts, but also of their macrostructure, which appears to be organised according to genre expectations and conventions rooted in the socio-cultural context. A typical example of generic structure analysis is the research article, which has been shown to follow three main fixed rhetorical macro- and micro-realization models. The first one, typically adopted by theoretical (or deductive) articles (more commonly found in the humanities, Roberts/Good 1993) consists of an introduction, a body and a conclusion. The second pattern, mainly used in experimental (or inductive) articles (typical of the ‘hard’ sciences), usually adopts the IMRD (Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) structure (Sollaci/Pereira 2004). The third pattern is typical of the problem-solution articles and consists of an introductory background, followed by the statement of purpose, the formulation of the solution provided by the authors and an evaluation of the solution (Hoey 2001). This third pattern is more common in applied sub-disciplines such as architecture and econometrics.

Genres vary according to several factors, the main ones being the communicative purposes they aim to fulfil, the settings or contexts

in which they are employed, the communicative events or activities they are associated with, the professional relationships between the people taking part in such activities or events, and the background knowledge of each participant.

Genre analysis has focused on the concept of genre as social action (Miller 1984); according to this perspective, rhetorical conventions relate to the communicative purpose of both the overall text and its different sections. Indeed, the communicative rationale “shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style” (Swales 1990: 58). For example, research articles are viewed as persuasive artefacts, generally following a logico-argumentative model and employing all the suitable linguistic devices constituting the ‘technical grammar’ of English (Halliday/Martin 1993) to perform the different rhetorical functions that constitute the various parts (or ‘moves’) of the text.

Generic knowledge is acquired within specialised communities through “a set of differentiated, sequenceable goal-directed activities drawing upon a range of cognitive and communicative procedures relatable to the acquisition of pre-genre and genre skills appropriate to a foreseen or emerging sociorhetorical situation” (Swales 1990: 76). Such skills constitute a ‘genre literacy’ (Cope/Kalantzis 1993; Neeley 2005) which distinguishes the more expert, senior members of a community from junior members and newcomers, in their role of recipients as well as producers of specialised discourse. Through training and engagement, specialists learn to implement the conventions associated with different types of text (Dressen-Hammouda 2008), and the conventional use of genres produces a ‘horizon of expectation’ (Todorov 1990) among their audience.

Genre analysis has become firmly established as one of the most popular approaches to the study of academic and professional discourse. In its initial phase, it was used especially for the description of variations in texts geared to language learning and teaching programmes (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1991, 1993). This pedagogic interest was also due to the influence of research in the area of composition studies in American universities, which had developed an approach which is commonly referred to as ‘New Rhetoric’ (Freedman/Medway 1994). As such, the main emphasis was on the analysis of linguistic

form, although the basis of genre theory has always been the relationship between text and context, viewed both as what surrounds a text and as what makes a particular genre possible in specific contexts.

In recent years, however, genre theory has taken a closer interest in context understood in its broader sense, paying particular attention to interactions depending not only on generic form and content, but more importantly on how genres are constructed, interpreted and exploited for the achievement of specific goals in specialised contexts. These relatively new concerns have driven genre theory in the direction of a more comprehensive, powerful multidimensional framework capable of handling not only texts, but also contexts in a more meaningful manner (Smart 1998; Swales 1998, 2004; Bhatia 2004). In this sense, the emphasis has almost been reversed, with the context generally attracting more attention in the description of specialised genres. Moreover, recent years have seen a growth in linguistic research of a sociological or anthropological nature, seeking to reconstruct the interactional dimension of the main genres employed by disciplinary communities, institutional bodies and the professions (Bhatia 2008).

The availability of a diverse range of methodological tools for specialised genre analysis – some of which include ethnographic, corpus-based, socio-cognitive, and socio-critical discourse analytical approaches – has expanded the range of genres targeted by analysts. Such work comprises interesting studies of ‘mixed’, ‘embedded’ or ‘hybrid’ genres across generic boundaries and disciplinary domains (Fairclough 1993; Bhatia 2004). Genre theory has also encouraged researchers to explore some of the lesser known ‘occluded’ genres of academia – such as application forms, calls for papers, citation indexes, grant proposals, Internet discussion lists, journal style guides, recommendation letters (Swales 1990; Berkenkotter/Huckin 1995, Hyon 2008, Hyland 2011) – and to identify discrepancies between global textual conventions and their actual realisations, through new concepts such as *genre mixing*, *repurposing* and *hybridisation* to account for generic dynamism. Moreover, research has shown how single genres often rely on other related genres, thus forming systems of genres (Bazerman 1994, Paltridge 2000).

Recent technological developments have promoted the emergence of new genres in a range of different contexts, including the academy. These new genres show a great reliance on the use of visual and hypertextual modes of representation, which – combined with their greater interactive features – thus offer better possibilities for interaction and ‘communicational action’ (Kress 2003). The new technologies have made it easier to create multimodal texts that make use not only of printed texts, but also of other semiotic resources such as images, audio and video in order to make meaning. Moreover, the growth of the Internet has facilitated the dissemination and appropriation of digital texts, thus granting media consumers a more active role.

These developments explain the increasing interest in phenomena that lie beyond single genres, including texts realised through a variety of non-traditional semiotic modes, visual presentations and the Internet (Lemke 2002, Bateman 2008). However, the inclusion of non-linguistic elements as essential to the identification of a specific genre has placed analysis under pressure. Genres have been found sometimes so open and boundaries so flexible that it has been difficult to establish what should fall under a specific genre and what not. Particularly when approaches to genre analysis are explicitly ‘transmedial’ or ‘intermedial’, it is often unclear to specify which properties can be considered genre-related and which not. However, despite these problematic conceptual issues and debated methodological questions, genre analysis remains remarkably productive in terms of new findings and applications.

## 2. Contents of the volume

Many of the issues outlined above are investigated in the chapters of this volume. To facilitate a comparison of the various perspectives taken by their authors, such contributions have been grouped into four sections, each of which provides interesting insights into different academic genres.

### *2.1. Theoretical insights*

The analytical sections are preceded by a more theoretical one, in which chapters discuss some of the most relevant changes and recent innovations in various fields of research into academic genres.

CAROL BERKENKOTTER's chapter is concerned with questions of genre variation as they apply to the blog, as a new form of scholarly interaction and a newcomer to the genre systems of academic communication. In particular, she points out that several disagreements and different underlying assumptions about generic variation have much to do with the theorist's underlying conceptual framework and disciplinary training. She rightly asserts that if a theorist begins with the concept of genre as a socio-rhetorical form, the conventions of which undergo rapid change over time, she is, at the assumption level, conceiving of the genre as both a form of social action and a technological artifact, external to the knowledge stores of the users. If, on the other hand, the analyst conceives genre as a recognition category, i.e., as the scaffold of individual orientation and collective social action, then, for analytical purposes, it becomes necessary not to conflate the technological artifact (i.e., the software) with the recognizable texts that are the instantiations of genres. She then propose four criteria for evaluating the generic status of online blog-posts: a) Affordances, b) Uptake, c) Dynamism, d) Stance, and applies the latter to the analysis of both an academic and a student blog. She concludes her chapter by raising important questions for a fuller understanding of the processes through which Internet 'texts', such as blogs and wikis have undergone change and points out the need for future research, with analysts using an expanded repertoire of methods, as research into these new genres and the processes through which they are evolving is still at a very early stage.

VIJAY K. BHATIA investigates the way different academic genres are interdiscursively held in some kind of creative tension. In particular, by focusing on the discursive construction of research journal articles based on doctoral theses, he shows that understanding of interdiscursivity can explain the communicative processes which are specific to these two different genres. Bhatia highlights the need for a socio-pragmatic investigation, which is particularly helpful in explaining how these two research genres (doctoral theses and research



journal articles) are embedded in typical academic practices with their own use of semiotic resources in order to cope with the disciplinary constraints typical of the discourse community participants and of their specific goals. Indeed Bhatia's investigation shows that a mere analysis of the rhetorical organisation of the two genres may lead to the wrong impression that they are structurally similar, especially in terms of their use of intertextual (text-internal) resources, as both of them have an almost identical set of moves and steps. Bhatia instead suggests a critical approach to genre analysis, also focusing on text-external factors and the interdiscursivity involved in the writing process. This approach will help the analyst get a better understanding of the challenges facing novice writers of research articles for submission to international journals.

## *2.2. Presenting research insights*

The second section deals with those academic genres that are principally devoted to the presentation of research results. The most typical of these genres are the research article, the conference presentation and the PhD dissertation. These three main genres are the object of analysis of the chapters in this section. In the first of these, DAVIDE GIANNONI analyses explicit value-marking lexis in a corpus of 100 research articles, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools. His aim is to illustrate how authors across the academic spectrum express the value of Goodness to muster consensus on key aspects of their epistemological practices. The results of the analysis show that Goodness is most evident in the Social Sciences, as these disciplines are particularly 'value-laden', compared to other domains.

DAVIDE MAZZI's chapter examines the occurrence of argument by analogy within a corpus of medico-scientific research articles. The data show that argument by analogy mainly clusters in Results and Discussion sections, which is not surprising, as these two sections are those where argumentation becomes most evident, with writers trying to present their data in a convincing way. By contrast, a more limited presence of argument by analogy was noted in the first two sections of research articles, i.e. Introductions and Methodology. The findings

highlight the centrality of argument by analogy in the reasoning of professional medico-scientific writers as well as in their discursive realisations. In particular, this argumentative technique is frequently used as a means to reinforce the writer's argument by overcoming the potentially exceeding fragmentation of specific findings discussed in Results sections, and by making sure that proper links are established between the data presented. Moreover, analogy has proved to be a useful tool allowing the writer to lay strong emphasis on the value of the study in comparison with relevant research.

PILAR MUR-DUEÑAS explores the intrageneric and intradisciplinary variation of research articles in two different sites of publication – a foundational English-medium international journal and its sister journal – in terms of their macro- and microstructure. This analysis of variation within the same genre is meant to unveil the scholars' writing professional discursive practices when they have to adjust their writing conventions to different publication sites. The analysis shows that two main aspects – their length and the reviewing process they undergo – influence the type of information included in each of the four sections around which the research articles in both publications are organised. The research articles in the two journals fit into the IMRD structure, and the Methods and Results constitute the core and longest part of the research report. However, the other steps are subject to variation and tend not to be included to the same extent in the shorter research accounts published in the off-shoot journal.

WILLIAM BROMWICH's study examines the conventions of generic integrity as identified in a corpus of jurisprudence and philosophy of law, and considers in particular the use of metadiscursive devices, including both evaluative lexis and stance markers, deployed by expert scholars critiquing the work of colleagues. The analysis reveals that criticism and praise are often combined within the same rhetorical move. Moreover, criticism is often accompanied by hedging devices and self-deprecation moves, enabling the author to express a criticism in a tactful way. Hedging devices are also employed when a possible misunderstanding is imputed to other members of the discourse community. In case of harsh criticism, impersonal forms are frequently adopted, as they enable the author to sidestep any potential confrontation or involvement in the ensuing controversy. To express

implied dissent, interrogative forms are also used, enabling the author to raise doubts without taking too critical a stance in relation to an argument put forward by another author. All these writer-oriented strategies contribute to the personal credibility of the authors, who, while seeking to make a critical contribution to their specialised field, are careful not to overstep the confines of collegiality in order to avoid undermining the personal relations that are essential to the production and refinement of domain-specific knowledge.

FRANCISCO JAVIER FERNÁNDEZ POLO's chapter deals with the specific move in a conference presentation which corresponds to the identification of the topic of the presentation. This move tends to occur rather early in the introduction and to be highly redundant, since the topic – besides appearing in the conference programme – has already been announced by the panel chairperson. Fernández Polo argues that the repetition of the topic at the beginning of the presentation plays a number of important roles: besides marking the boundary with the previous talk and highlighting the importance of the topic, it allows speakers to engage their audiences' attention, to clarify the title from a complementary perspective, and to manage their own stress. Relying on a corpus of conference paper introductions compiled for this study, the author analyses the intertextual relationship between the presenter's topic announcement and the title slide, and characterises the typical internal structure and language features of this rhetorical element. The analysis presented in this chapter highlights the highly intertextual aspect of this move, which may suggest the impression of a high degree of repetitiveness. However, the visual presentation of the title and the speaker's actual topic announcement to the audience are not to be considered redundant but complementary, as the written title conveys the voice of the expert whereas the spoken presentation talks to the colleague.

The next chapter, by SUE STARFIELD, BRIAN PALTRIDGE and LOUISE RAVELLI, explores the written components of what have become known as practice-based doctorates. Indeed, it has sometimes been suggested that it should be possible for the creative work itself to embody the characteristics of originality and significant contribution without reference to a written text. However, the data examined in this chapter point to a consensus over the need for a written component,

although the presence of abundant visual and other non-verbal elements gives rise to dynamic tensions that have relevant effects on both genre change and stability. Overall, despite the difficulty of writing, supervisors see value in the written component, which is considered to provide some legitimation for the creative work reported in the thesis. The survey and interview data also suggest a degree of diversity from institution to institution and a fluidity of approaches to the relationship between written and creative components so as to adjust this relationship in order to suit individual students' needs. This exploration of the relationship between creative and written components in the practice-based thesis in the visual and performing arts thus represents an excellent opportunity to imagine the possible evolution of doctoral theses.

Also the following chapter investigates the academic genre of the doctoral thesis/dissertation. MASUMI ONO adopts both a cross-cultural and an intra-cultural approach to explore generic structures in the introductory chapters of PhD theses in the field of literature. Comparing productions in Japanese and English, she finds cross-cultural differences in the frequency of steps in each thesis: the English thesis introductory chapters contain significantly more steps than the Japanese ones. In addition, she finds that the Japanese and the English groups do not necessarily share obligatory steps in the introductory chapters. Moreover, the Japanese and the English groups show cross-cultural differences in the use of each step over the total number of steps identified in a thesis. This finding implies the existence of disciplinary variations in rhetorical features in this genre. The analysis of move-specific and move-independent steps shows their varying degree of 'independency' as steps seem to vary in the degree to which each step is related to each move. Although this study focuses on a single discipline, namely literature, its results indicate that the 'Presenting fictional work and/or its author' move seems to be discipline-specific.

### *2.3. Reviewing and popularising research insights*

The third section is devoted to those genres which are used by researchers not so much to present their own innovative findings but which instead review them in scholarly discussions or disseminate

them among peer colleagues in the academic community. This section also investigates those genres which make use of specialised information for popularising aims or for internal evaluative purposes, such as in the case of Master's theses.

ANNA STERMIERI's chapter investigates the academic theatre review (ATR) in order to provide an outline of its prototypical move structure and identify aspects of diachronic variation that may have occurred to the genre over ten years, between 1991 and 2001. Stermieri's analysis shows that the ATR has a consistent generic pattern of rhetorical organization, which not only is perceived as existing by the professionals producing the genre, but which has been retrieved with a certain degree of regularity in the texts taken into consideration. This pattern consists of four main moves: the Introductory Move, the Contextualising Move, the Narrative Move and the Evaluative Move. The analysis of the moves reveals an interesting feature characterizing the Narrative Move, that is to say the double deixis of time and space that is used by the critic in describing the events taking place on stage. This dichotomy leads Stermieri to hypothesise that ATRs are characterised by a double focus, which reflects the complexity of the production presentations on which they are based. The second part of the analysis, focusing on elements of diachronic variation, highlights a shift of the stance of the critic to a more involved position, which is manifested by an increase in the use of evaluative expressions.

SUSAN KERMAZ investigates the genre of the science news report, a useful source of information for the researcher and student alike as well indeed for the lay reader. This genre has proved to be a very challenging text type, as in some cases it is extremely technical with features of specialised texts addressed to a purely scientific community, while in others it is a popularized informative text with occasional pedagogic features. This chapter examines 47 reports from the field of botany between 2006 and 2011 along with the relative academic abstracts of 26 of these reports. The analysis shows a difference between academic abstracts and science news reports in the use of Latin names in the former versus the use of the common names in the latter. Moreover, lexical choices are made according to the topic and readership: in reports, technical language is mostly adjusted to the lay readership. The few technical words that occur have definitions

very similar to those encountered in pedagogic text books and processes are occasionally described metaphorically. What distinguishes the science news reports from everyday journalism is the impersonal, neutral format. The features identified lead Kermas to conclude that the science news report is fundamentally academic and adapts its style according to the hypothetical recipient's needs.

The aim of ISABEL HERRANDO-RODRIGO's chapter is to describe the main linguistic features of medical electronic popularisations (Med-E-Pops) and to compare them to those of the medical research articles (Med-RAs) from which they are derived. Her analysis shows that the former are not simple reformulations of the latter. Instead, the key difference between these two genres is that they provide contrasting views of medicine as a science: popularisations focus on the objects of study, while articles on the disciplinary procedures by which they are studied. Moreover, there are differences in language choices which are meant to convey the different meanings of both genres. However, contrary to previous research, this chapter shows that informality is no longer a characteristic of medical popularisations published on the net, as these texts aim to have the same neutral and informative purpose as Med-RAs in order to create an atmosphere of reliability, objectivity and professionalism. Therefore the resulting style of Med-E-Pops is hybrid, as they try to bridge the RA academic formality to the comprehension demanded by the Med-E-Pop readership. Although the language used seeks neutrality and impersonality in order to raise credibility, the passive voice so frequently used in peer reviewed scientific Med-RAs is transformed into active voice. Moreover, the subjects of these active constructions are always human and personal, and generally correspond to the Med-RA researchers themselves. Moreover, Med-E-Pops make great use of reported speech, due to the fact that Med-E-Pop writers commonly quote and cite the RA researchers in their popularising texts. In this way they give voice to researchers to mitigate the potential impact of the research itself and avoid any kind of personal linkage to it.

The object of analysis of the next chapter is the weblog, a genre that is becoming increasingly popular among academics as a tool for personal publishing and discussion. Its wide use suggests that academic weblogs are meeting specific communicative needs and filling a

gap in the system of genres of scholarly communication. The aim of MARÍA JOSÉ LUZÓN's research is to study how the interpersonal strategies in blog comments compare to those used in other academic and computer-mediated communication (CMC) genres. Academic blogs are commonly employed to share information, disseminate the bloggers' research, test ideas with a broad audience, thus establishing and reinforcing links within a virtual community. This chapter particularly investigates the discursive features of comments in academic blogs and shows that these comments are a hybrid form of academic communication which combines features from a variety of oral and written academic genres and from other CMC genres, adapting them for new social practices. The main discursive strategies adopted by academics in blogs are meant to build and sustain affective and solidarity relations in the community but also strategies intended to construe confrontation and conflict. The adoption of the latter is favoured by the written technology-afforded features of weblogs, which allow for greater potential anonymity.

The next two chapters focus on the Master's thesis, which has only recently been subjected to deep research. OLGA DONTCHEVA-NAVRATILOVA's chapter examines cross-cultural variation in the construal of authorial voice in relation to the generic structure of theses written by Czech and German students of English. The main purpose of the investigation is to analyse how novice non-native speakers use pronominal self-reference items and impersonal *it*-constructions to present findings and negotiate claims. The analysis demonstrates that while clearly showing awareness of Anglo-American academic discourse conventions and the specificity of the Master's thesis as a genre, the choices of novice writers reflect the insufficient development of their rhetorical skills, as well as interference from L1 academic literacy and advice provided by style manuals on academic writing, supervisors and academic writing courses. Czech and German students, however, do not seem to adopt the same strategies in the construal of authorial voice in their argumentation, as divergences have been observed as regards the frequency and degree of author visibility, the level of authority assumed by the writers and the textual points at which they make themselves visible.

RENATA POVOLNÁ's study focuses on how semantic relations of cause and contrast are expressed in the genre of Master's theses written by students of English from two different non-native discourse communities: the Czech Republic and Germany. Her aim is to find out whether there is any cross-cultural variation in their use of causal and contrastive discourse markers. Povolná's analysis shows that there is some cross-cultural variation in the ways in which the Czech and German students express causal and contrastive relations, particularly in the extent to which they apply the hypotactic and paratactic discourse markers at their disposal. Moreover, students display, on the one hand, a redundant use of a rather limited repertoire of certain markers, and, on the other, the misuse of some other markers. This behaviour is mainly attributable to individual students' knowledge and preferences in writing habits and to overt instructions provided by teachers of academic writing as well as by field-specific advice given by thesis supervisors.

#### *2.4. Insights into pedagogic genres*

The chapters in this section investigate those genres which are used in the teaching of specialised disciplines at a university level. Some of them also discuss the role played by the new technologies for didactic purposes and the influence exerted by them on the more traditional teaching activities. Others instead investigate forms of institutional discourse through which academia presents itself to the public and offers them its services, namely its courses.

CARMEN SANCHO-GUINDA examines accounts of visual data, which constitute a borderline genre virtually unresearched in applied linguistics. Commentaries of visuals, instead, have proved to be a very interesting field of research because of their hybridity, their hyper-textual nature and their argumentative value. In her discourse-based and corpus-informed study, Sancho-Guinda examines more than 400 commentaries written by aeronautical engineering students on five different kinds of graphs, paying particular attention to a few contextual and cotextual factors which shape the accounts and generate variation in such discourse. Her analysis shows that visual data reports



display considerable variation as to the expression of positioning (i.e. writers' stance and reader-oriented engagement strategies) and are influenced by factors such as the predominant metadiscursive function determined by the type of graphic, the topic or object of representation, and the expectations about the community of practice to which the commentary is addressed. Her findings reveal a tendency to favour engagement strategies at the expense of the disclosure of stance, influenced by the type of graph and the content represented. In addition, the generalised redundancy and the difficulties of some students to match certain visuals with their purpose suggest the convenience of explicit instruction.

MICHELA GIORDANO's chapter analyses a corpus of contract case briefs, an out-of-class genre which law students are required to master to gain background knowledge of a particular branch of law. Starting from the four-move structure of legal cases described by Bhatia (1993), this chapter highlights how the communicative purpose and the standard format of a classroom brief both account for the employment of a variable amount of information, distributed over a series of detailed sub-moves such as facts, procedural posture, issue, holding, and rationale. In addition, abbreviations and symbols are examined in order to show how these represent rhetorical strategies the student adopts as a way of analysing a particular case opinion in a formulaic way, recording and summarizing the outcomes for further research and classroom discussion. This study shows that students' case briefs can be considered an independent genre, inasmuch as they exploit specific characteristics and rhetorical features typical both of academic practice in American Law Schools and professional legal practice. Although the classroom context and the rhetorical functions of students' case briefs are different from the specialised rhetoric of professional writing, due to their move structure and the rhetorical devices adopted, case briefs can certainly favour apprenticeship to the legal profession.

The recent technological changes have promoted a revision of the concept of literacy, with its expansion to include 'new literacies' enabling students to understand new forms of representation and social interaction in digital media. Within this context, CHRISTOPH A. HAFNER, LINDSAY MILLER and CONNIE NG KWAI-FUN examine the possibility of combining these new forms of representation and

interaction with a more traditional focus on students' development of discipline specific English for academic purposes. Taking into consideration, in particular, an English course for students of science, they focus their attention on the digital video scientific documentaries that the students are expected to create. This pedagogic tool is shown to be an example of a hybrid genre in digital media, as it combines digital literacy practices with more conventional scientific literacy practices. The use of this tool is shown to broaden the traditional focus of the English for academic purposes course on academic genres, as in creating and publically sharing their digital documentaries, students experiment with innovative, multimodal forms of representation and consider how to attract the attention of even a non-specialist audience on the Internet.

PATRIZIA ANESA and DANIELA IOVINO investigate how and to what extent Information and Communication Technology tools may enhance the hybridization of academic genres. In particular, they take into consideration the way in which the use of interactive whiteboards may contribute to combining and merging features that usually typify different genres, such as lectures, seminars, workshops and presentations. By analyzing various moments of interaction in university lectures, they highlight specific features that may be associated with different genres. Indeed, from a multimodal perspective, even though generally considered a predominantly spoken genre, lectures combine spoken, written and visual features. From an interactional point of view, the lectures analysed here display considerably different levels of interaction between lecturer and students as well as great stylistic variation. Moreover, the investigation presented in this chapter shows how the use of certain tools and technologies may be an enhancer of hybridization as the versatility of the tool allows the integration of elements that generally characterize different events within the same context.

The aim of SARA GESUATO's chapter is to investigate the lexicogrammatical representation of the events and the participants that are central to academic course descriptions in order to assess their visibility and to determine whether the assertions made about these events and participants qualify the texts as informational or regulatory or both. Gesuato's analysis shows that teachers and students seldom

appear in the texts as direct interlocutors, although they are the communication participants. Most of the time, they are referred to as third parties. On the other hand, the courses are foregrounded as prominent textual entities as if they were in charge of educational goals. The prevalent use of the simple present tense and the *will* future in the texts is meant to give the impression that courses are well-organized and thought-out, as the future events being referred to are announced with unmitigated certainty. Moreover, this verbal usage increases the authoritativeness of the texts as it represents events as definite arrangements not susceptible to change. Impositions are not made explicit by the adoption of deontic modality, and requirements are mentioned as facts but not imposed as commands. This way, the academic course providers manifest concern for the addressees, while remaining in charge of the discourse.

### 3. Concluding remarks

The various investigations gathered in this volume provide several examples of the complexity and flexibility of genres, which have shown to be subject to a continuous tension between stability and change as well as between convention and innovation (Schryer 1993). Indeed, they have proved to be a very versatile tool that can easily be adapted to new communicative situations and to the specific needs of the participants involved.

In particular, the field of academic genres has witnessed important developments, which have not only concerned the more traditional genres such as those of the research article and the conference presentation, but also relevant innovations particularly promoted by the use of the new technologies employed both in the presentation of research results and in their discussion among the academic community, as well as their dissemination to a wider community by means of popularising and teaching activities. These innovations have not only favoured important changes in existing genres and the creation of new

ones to meet emerging needs of the academic community but they have also promoted a serious discussion about the construct of genre itself.

The chapters of this volume have identified and explored issues which certainly deserve particular attention. Some answers to the questions aroused by the analyses presented here are offered by the authors, while others await further investigation. It is hoped therefore that the volume will contribute to debate and reflection on such a fundamental linguistic construct.

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*Presenting Research Insights*





CAROL BERKENKOTTER

## Genre Change in the Digital Age: Questions about Dynamism, Affordances, Evolution

### 1. Introduction

Questions about how and why genres change have been around for some time in applied linguistics and writing studies (e.g., Hyland 2002; Bhatia 2004; Devitt 2004; Bawarshi/Reiff 2010); however, the advent of new media has invested such questions with new urgency. For example, are Internet blogs, chats, Facebook and Wikipedia *new* discursive phenomena, or are they recent incarnations of earlier genres in new medial attire? This question and others catalyze the debate among genre theorists and researchers – as do questions about how the affordances of Internet software facilitate copying, pasting, and hyper-linking, all techniques for endowing the digital ‘text’ with its new fluidity (Gitrow/Stein 2009), fluidity that turns conventional notions of text/context relationships on their head. In this chapter, I will be concerned with questions of genre variation as they apply to the blog (and the practice of blogging), as “a new form of scholarly interaction” (see Luzón, this volume), and a newcomer to the genre systems (Bazerman, 1994) of academic communication.

### 2. Genre change in the digital age

Nowhere does our understanding of genre variation, i.e., the processes through which genres change, become more of a challenge than in the context of digital communication. Much has been written on Internet

genres (see, for example, Crystal 2006, 2011; the essays in Giltrow/Stein 2009; Russell/Fisher 2009; Myers 2010). Indeed, the issue of how Internet genres come into being and how they change, given the selection pressures and affordances of digital media is so large and so complex, that in this chapter I can do no more than point to some provocative questions raised by recent research (Miller/Shepherd 2004, 2009; Herring *et al.* 2005, 2006; Segal 2009; Myers 2010).

- How is a genre's stability or dynamism altered by Internet technology? If existing genres such as blogs quickly differentiate into species (i.e., 'speciation'), in view of such rapid evolution (Miller/Shepherd 2009), how relevant are such concepts as 'stability' and 'dynamism'?
- Do some researchers mistakenly conflate genre differentiation with the software development, i.e., the 'affordances' of the medium through which such differentiation is produced?
- Is the term 'genre' appropriate to apply to the various forms of Internet discourse, such as e-mail, blogs, chats, and tweets? Crystal notes: "They are often described as genres, but that [usage] suggests a homogeneity, which has not yet been established", and he urges linguists to "demonstrate linguistic coherence, not assume it" (2011: 9-10). He makes the further point that systematic studies of the varieties of digital communication are still at a very early stage.

Questions arise concerning the proliferation of these protean forms when researchers study their rapid changes over time; there appears to be a tendency among some analysts to conflate the concept of rhetorical form with the affordances of the medium in which that form appears. For example, in a 2004 essay, Miller and Shepherd concluded that the blog is a genre "that addresses a timeless rhetorical exigence in ways that are specific to its time. In the blog, the potentialities of technology, a set of cultural patterns, rhetorical conventions available in antecedent genres [e.g. the commonplace book], and the history of the subject combined to produce a recurrent rhetorical motive that has found a conventional mode of expression. [...] The blog as genre is a contemporary contribution to the 'art of the self'."

However, in a later essay (2009) in which the authors revisited many of the assumptions that they made in their 2004 article, Miller and Shepherd recanted, concluding: “*The* blog, it seems clear now is a technology, a medium, a constellation of affordances – and not a genre. [...] The genre and the medium, the social action and its instrumentality, fit so well that they seemed coterminous, and it was thus easy to mistake the one for the other – as we did” (2009: 283).

Interestingly, Miller and Shepherd’s 2009 article is marked by their use of a set of concepts and lexicon borrowed from evolutionary biology, e.g. ‘speciation’, ‘affordances’, ‘niche’. One problem in applying concepts from biology to the technological context in which ‘texts’ such as blogs arise, is that it is too easy for the analyst to bracket off the psycho-social, economic, and political needs that gave rise to the communicative impulses in the first place, thus slipping into the epistemological pitfall of technological determinism. At the same time, using evolutionary metaphors is effective rhetorically because such metaphors are powerful heuristically (for their explanatory payoff) evoking as they do, a ‘master plot’ of Darwinian natural selection.

On the other hand, the analyst might begin with the assumption that genres are socio-cognitive *recognition categories*, and that as such, they can be “as fine-grained and differentiated as users recognize and orient towards. From this perspective, as instantiations increase, it is to be expected that experienced users will start to create and recognize many typifications [in order to] orient themselves and navigate – as well as to shape rhetorical recognitions” (Bazerman p.c.).

We can see that such disagreements and different underlying assumptions about generic variation have much to do with the theorist’s underlying conceptual framework and, most likely, disciplinary training. If that theorist begins with the concept of genre as a socio-rhetorical form, the conventions of which undergo rapid change over time, she is, at the assumption level, conceiving of the genre as both a form of social action and a technological artifact, external to the knowledge stores of the users. If, on the other hand, the analyst conceives genre as a recognition category, i.e., as the scaffold of individual orientation and collective social action, then, for analytical purposes, it becomes necessary *not* to conflate the technological artifact (i.e., the software), with the recognizable texts that are the instantia-

tions of those ‘forms of life’ (Lash 2001), we call genres. As Myers observes, “the users of these texts [blogs, Wikis] don’t just create a genre, they create a social world” (2010: 21).

### 3. Four criteria for evaluating the generic status of online blog-posts

One way to operationalize the concept of genre as a *recognition category* is to consider what blog writers *do* when they ‘weigh in’, ‘hold forth’, or otherwise express their opinions, i.e., what techniques do they use? The assumptions that underlie this question are as follows:

- a. Drawing on the concept of genre knowledge (Berkenkotter/Huckin 1995), that a genre is:
  - a form of writers’ stored and evolving mental representations; and that
  - as academic or student ‘writers-in-training’ engage in disciplinary activities, they deploy their knowledge of the generic constraints and resources of the digital medium in which they are working,
- b. we can, then, best understand the generic status of academic blogs when we examine them as instantiations of situated, local knowledge, specific to the moment, its rhetorical exigence<sup>1</sup> and linguistic requirements. Based on these assumptions, I propose four criteria for evaluating the generic status of online blog-posts: a) Affordances, b) Uptake, c) Dynamism, d) Stance.

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1 The term ‘exigence’, as it is used by rhetoricians, refers to a set of unexpected conditions marked by an urgency.

### *3.1. The concept of affordances*

The term ‘affordances’ was first used by Gibson (1977) to describe the way that an animal perceives elements of the environment in terms of how it might use them. In the CERLIS conference presentation on which this chapter is based, I used the example of the cavity in an old tree as being what wood ducks perceive as a wood duck nest. Based on the physical dimensions of that cavity, bird lovers can go online and Google the instructions for making a wood duck nesting box. An online technical drawing provides the dimensions for making a wood duck nesting box, which can seem attractive to the female wood duck as a nesting site.

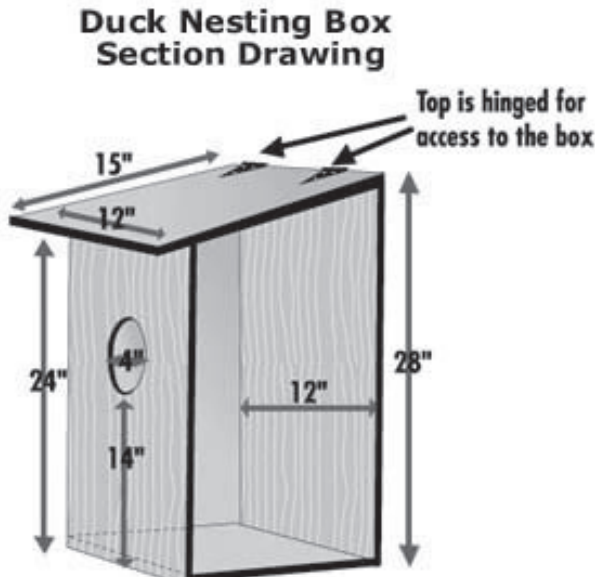


Figure 1. The concept of affordances: Mother wood duck nesting box.

This is an example of how an object in nature can be replicated with a man-made object, which ostensibly provides even more comfort for the egg-laying female. Transferring the concept of affordances to the context of digital media, the features of blogs – reverse chronological

order, hypertextual links to other sites, and a box for readers' comments – features that can be seen to be “aspects of the environment that writers see in terms of their use” (Myers 2010: 21), the idea of digital technology as providing affordances becomes clearer.

### *3.2. The concept of uptake*

Within speech act theory as developed by Austin (1962), ‘uptake’ refers to how an illocutionary act (for example, saying “It’s hot in here” with the intention of getting someone to cool the room), gets taken up as a perlocutionary effect: someone opens a window – or turns up the air conditioner. In the communicative setting of the Internet’s blogging sites, uptake refers to how readers respond to a blog post, for example, using the comments box to express their reactions. In this context the uptake may be a positive response, such as: “Interesting study”, or “I completely agree with your main point”, or one that is negative, e.g., “I disagree with your premise”, or “Your reasoning is flawed because you neglected to include *x* (or *y* or *z*), as a possible intervening variable” (see Luzón, this volume, for an analysis of positive and negative blog comments).

### *3.3. The concept of dynamism*

As one of the four quintessential features of genres, ‘dynamism’ was initially conceived by Berkenkotter and Huckin to refer to the idea that genres are “dynamic rhetorical forms that are developed from actors’ responses to recurrent situations and that serve to stabilize experience and give it coherence and meaning” (1995: 4). Furthermore, “genres change over time in response to their users’ socio-cognitive needs” (1995: 4). Revisiting this concept in the context of digital communication, we can reframe our understanding of *dynamism* to include the tension between the centripetal forces, i.e., constraints of the medium such as writing in a text box, or field, that cannot later be revised, and the centrifugal forces of individual creativity, that may, in fact, exploit the affordances of the medium, such as coining neologisms, or

adding links to other texts, images, or video, toward the goal of creating an interdiscursive (see Bhatia, this volume), blog post. In this respect, in a digital environment, genres become ‘technological forms of life’ (Lash 2001), a human/machine interface that is characteristic of computer-mediated communication. Hence, the need to ‘tweak’ the concept of dynamism.

### 3.4. *The concept of stance*

Biber and Finnegan (1989), describe stance as “the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes or feelings, judgments, or commitments concerning the propositional content of a message”. Why should applied linguists be concerned about stance in academic writing? Hyland (2002), noted that researchers “have recently started to explore the interpersonal uses of language, particularly evaluative language”. In the context of academic discourse, evaluation refers to “a speaker/writer’s attitudes and values, often termed ‘stance’, ‘affect’, or ‘appraisal’, and it is important both as a system of organizing discourse and a means by which individuals express their value systems and those of their communities” (2002: 120).

The scope of this chapter prevents me from providing a fuller description of how analysts might operationalize *each* of the above criteria for analyzing the generic status of online blog posts. In the next section I will limit my focus to examining bloggers’ uses of stance markers to qualify or ‘package’ their evaluative utterances.

## 4. How stance is represented in bloggers’ posts

Since many, if not most, writers use blogs in order to give readers their opinions on a variety of subjects, topics and events, it stands to reason that ‘stance’ functions as a necessary rhetorical, lexico-gram-

matical feature of blogging. According to Myers, “from a linguistic perspective, nearly every sentence has some sort of evaluation, explicit or implied”. At the same time, “bloggers are quite careful about the ways they mark their opinions as (just) opinions” (2010: 96). The care with which bloggers ‘package’ their evaluations of their colleagues’ research can be seen in the following post by an astrophysicist – Jeff – who comments on a colleague’s tendency to ignore the problem of defining ‘now’ as part of his theory of time:<sup>2</sup>

*Personally, I think they may be making a big mistake, but I don't know how else they could proceed, objectively.*

(Comment to *Cosmic Variance*; rpt in Myers 2010: 95)

The writer’s assertion, “they are making a mistake”, is carefully qualified by a number of stance markers. The first of these is the adverbial, *personally*, which prefaces and foregrounds the main clause, as the writer’s opinion. This adverbial qualifier is followed by the hedge, *I think*, the verb in the main clause. As if this were not enough, the writer, Jeff, also uses the modal *may* which hedges the central assertion in the first sentence, that the colleagues “are making a big mistake”. Finally, after the assertion, the writer adds another qualification, “but I don’t know how else they could proceed, objectively”. From a rhetorical perspective, this writer’s use of various stance markers in the above sentence signals that ‘Jeff’ is presenting a cautious scientific persona through a set of discourse markers that simultaneously assert and hedge/qualify/soften the claim, “they *may* be making a big mistake”.

Most often, bloggers are not quite as cautious as the above writer is in using stance markers; however, I like to think of the above sentence as a prototype of how a writer can use stance markers to hedge an assertion, or to soften a rather strong claim as his own opinion. The next section of this chapter presents an analysis of stance markers, as they appear in the blog posts of Greg Myers in 2009. Stance markers include a number of features that are most often dis-

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2 The analysis that follows is strictly for the purposes of demonstrating how this writer deployed stance markers in his posts.



cussed in other terms, including modal verbs (*can, may*), some main verbs (*believe, think, consider*) hedges (*possibly, perhaps*) reported speech (*they claim*), and conversational particles (*well, hmm*).

## 5. A brief analysis of a blog

During the period that Myers was writing his book, *The Discourse of Blogs and Wikis* (2010), he maintained a blog site which he discontinued after 2009. The following analysis of ‘stance’ in Myers’ blogs is by no means systematic.<sup>3</sup> Here it is purely a demonstration of how such an analysis could be conducted, although the coding scheme could certainly be used to analyze the entire corpus taken from the period that Myers was blogging (Dec.2007 – Sept.2009).<sup>4</sup> In his blog from Oct 3, 2009, Myers wrote:

Blogging has moved on since 2006. I didn’t *think* (1) *I would* find (2) any linguistic Twitterers, but 40 people *do find* (3) useful things to say at Linguistics Twibe.<sup>5</sup> *Well*, (4) there are mostly queries and announcements; *apparently* (5) it *does take* (6) more than 140 characters to say something about linguistics. (I *usually find* (7) the 8000 words of a journal article *rather* (8) restricting). (G. Myers, Oct. 3, 2009)

### 5.1. Stance markers in Myers’ 2009 blog

- (1) I didn’t *think*... (attitudinal verb followed by complement clause)
- (2) I *would* find (verb preceded by the modal *would*)

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3 By ‘not systematic’ I mean, that although I developed a coding scheme after reading the corpus of Myers’ blogs from 2006-9, I coded only a few of them for demonstration purposes, and did not use an independent coder.

4 He has since resumed blogging in early 2012, relative to a course he is currently teaching on twitterers and twittering.

5 ‘Linguistics Twibe’ is an Internet site for twitterers.

- (3) 40 people *do find* (epistemic verb, marking certainty; cf. Biber *et al.* 1999)
- (4) *Well* (conversational particle)
- (5) *apparently* (adverbial used to strengthen the statement that follows)
- (6) it *does take* (epistemic verb marking certainty)
- (7) I *usually* find (adverbial strengthening the claim in the main verb of the clause)
- (8) *rather* (adverbial used to strengthen the adjective that follows)

We can see from the above analysis of stance markers in Myers' blog, that of the 64 words in his post, ten are stance markers. It is possible that Myers, being conscious of lexical/grammatical stance markers, did not hesitate to use them himself to demonstrate the ways that experienced writers carefully 'package' their evaluative comments.

## 5.2. A student blog in a university course

The next example is from a student writer blogging about his responses to the reading in an upper level Communication Theory course.

Author: B. C. [Initials are used to protect the identify of the writer]

Date: March 21, 2011 3:46 PM

I *believe* (1) both e-mail and Facebook are efficient ways to communicate but they are used for different reasons. *Personally*, (2) I use Facebook as a way to stay in touch with friends and keep relationships ongoing. Emails are used for a completely different type of communication. E-mails are more formal and professional. I *would never send* (3) my friend an email to check in with him, I *would send* (4) him a message on Facebook or I-chat. *Essentially* (5) there is no real difference between sending a message via e-mail or Facebook *but to me* (6) Facebook is used solely for social networking and not formal communication. E-mails have become a big part of my life now that I have a job that requires me to be sending e-mails constantly. Other than my work e-mails most of the e-mails I get are junk mail from various websites. I *like Bryan's comment* (7) about how e-mail is sort of like a 'bulletin board', most of it doesn't apply to me so it gets deleted.

### 5.3. Stance markers in student blog

- (1) *I believe* (attitudinal verb plus complement clause – writers' most common way of marking stance)
- (2) *Personally* (adverbial marking clause as the writer's opinion)
- (3) *I would never send* (modal, plus negative, plus main verb – attitudinal marker)
- (4) *I would send him* (modal plus main verb – attitudinal marker; repetition of previous phrase for emphasis)
- (5) *Essentially* (adverbial used to strengthen the following clause)
- (6) *but to me* (contrastive conjunction plus personal pronoun marks clause that follows as writer's opinion)
- (7) *I like Bryan's comment* (Main verb – attitudinal marker; uptake from previous post, plus reported speech)

B.C.'s post is longer than that of Myers, 176 words as opposed to 64 words. 19 of the 176 words are stance markers, as opposed to the ratio of 10/64 appearing in Myers' post. Although we would expect to see more stance markers in the post of a much-published academic writer, the number of stance markers in B.C.'s posts suggest that he too is aware of the lexical-grammatical conventions of blog-posts. On the other hand, Myers' blogs are for a presumably much larger audience than that of the student's blogs, which appear in Moodle 2.0, a web-based platform, the affordances of which make it considerably different than the Internet-wide platform used by Myers and other widely followed bloggers.

## 6. Concluding remarks

I began this chapter by raising questions about how we might think about genre variation in the digital age. Traditional academic genres such as the scientific research paper and the literary belletristic essay are embedded in an academic peer review system that is meritocratic,

highly selective, and stable. If we think of genres as ‘forms of life’, to borrow a phrase from Wittgenstein (cf. Lash 2001), they have evolved slowly over long periods of time, subject to ‘selection pressures’, such as technological changes, distribution systems, and the rise of professional societies (or discourse communities), with their need to share and to disseminate information.

In the community of applied linguists, given the common goal of helping students to master the conventions of disciplinary academic genres in English, it has been only natural to have studied the morphology and the lexical/grammatical and more recently, the rhetorical features of these more venerable forms of academic discourse.

In contrast to these (relatively) stable forms of academic discourse, which are amenable to being taught, writers must now navigate through digital writing systems, e.g. wikis, chat groups, discussion forums, and blogs, just to name a few. Moreover, technological forms of life resulting from human-machine interface (cell phones, the Internet, etc.) are forms of ‘life at a distance’ (Lash 2001). In this respect, human communication loses its materiality. In the case of blogs and blogging as a discursive practice, early online genres, such as the personal diary blogs, the public affairs and political blogs, have – given the affordances of the medium (e.g., a hypertext with links to other blogs) – morphed into many other blog variations or sub-genres such as mommy blogs, linguists’ and other professional groups’ blogs, citizen journalists’ blogs (Bruns 2008), amateur TV drama critics blogs,<sup>6</sup> course or classroom blogs, etc. This is a brave new world of Internet discourse indeed!

As Luginbühl and Berkenkotter (in press) recently suggested, “Genres stabilize situations and social groups by [...] adapting flexibly to different communicative needs. If genre variation tends toward a certain direction in many instances and over a period of time, genres

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6 My thanks to Brigitte Musack, a doctoral student in the Writing Studies Department, University of Minnesota, for describing her experiences as a member of the discourse community of ‘citizen’ (Bruns 2008) TV drama criticism bloggers. More thanks go to Brian Larson, Ashley Clayson, Aimee Rogers, Brigitte Musack, Michael Madson, and Molly Li, students in the seminar on ‘Emergent Genres of the Internet’, for helping me ponder through the issues I address in this chapter.

can be said to evolve, or in some cases become obsolete. Genre variation can thus be conceptualized as variation, selection and ‘(re)stabilization’ (Gansell 2011: 110-120). At the same time, given the rapid pace of variation, or ‘speciation’ (Miller/Shepherd 2009), of blogs, there are a few thorny questions for genre analysts to ponder:

- How much speciation will a genre undergo before its heterogeneity overwhelms its genre integrity (Bhatia 2004)?
- Blogs are multi-modal hypertexts, with links to audio, photographic, and video productions or ‘produsage’ (Bruns 2008). How do applied linguists expand their repertoire of methods to describe/analyze multi-modal blogs?
- When can we speak of the emergence of a new genre? Genres usually originate relying on one or more antecedents. A crucial question about genre change is, therefore, at which point can a genre can no longer be considered as a variation of an existing genre, but establishes a new generic identity?”

(Luginühl/Berkenkotter, in press)

Such questions suggest that a fuller understanding of the processes through which Internet ‘texts’, such as blogs and wikis undergo change – or differentiation – will depend on future research, with analysts using an expanded repertoire of methods. It does seem clear at this point, however, that the arrival of Internet (digital) technology has produced as large a historical, cognitive, and material transformation as the printing press. Thus research into such ‘protean genres’ as blogs and the processes through which they are differentiating, or evolving, is at a very early stage.

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VIJAY K. BHATIA

## Interdiscursivity in Academic Genres

### 1. Interdiscursive space across academic genres and practices

In this chapter I would like to identify and discuss the issue of management of interdiscursive space in genre analysis by highlighting the concept of interdiscursivity. More specifically, I will focus on the discursive construction of research journal articles based on doctoral theses in academic practice by identifying some of the challenges facing novice writers of research articles for submission to international journals. In other words, I would like to explore and explain how different genres are interdiscursively held in some kind of creative tension; and how understanding of interdiscursivity can explain the communicative processes which are crucial to the appropriation of doctoral theses for the purpose of writing journal articles. In doing so, I will also suggest that a critical approach to genre analysis can be helpful in understanding and overcoming some of these challenges. However, before doing so I would like to introduce the concept of interdiscursive socio-pragmatic space in genre theory as part of the three-space model for genre analysis I proposed in Bhatia (2004). The model can be adapted as shown in Figure 1 below to represent various levels of analyses for academic discourse for research and publication.