Review article

On Vijay K. Bhatia:
Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings (1993)

Genre Analysis - Step by Step

This short review, along with the other reviews in this issue of *Hermes*, sets out to give a brief description of Vijay K. Bhatia's work of 1993 *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings*. Since four general reviews inevitably would overlap massively, they each focus on one particular aspect of Bhatia (1993). I shall, nevertheless, present a very brief review of the book in general. For the main part of the review, I have chosen to focus on the model for genre analysis consisting of seven steps which should be followed if one is "to undertake a comprehensive investigation of any genre" (Bhatia, 1993: 22).

Bhatia (1993) consists of three parts, starting with an outline of a theory of genre analysis, which is followed by detailed exemplification, and the final part discusses fields of application.

Part one ("Genre Analysis - Theoretical Preliminaries") deals with the theory of genre analysis. Chapter 1 gives a short historical overview of the development of discourse analysis as a multidisciplinary disciplin applying insights from various fields like literature, linguistics, sociology, ethnomethodology, philosophy, and cognitive psychology, to genre analysis where Bhatia leaves the more general concept of register for the sake of the more detailed analysis of specific genres. Also, Bhatia shows and advocates a tendency for genre analysis to move from mere surface oriented pure linguistic description to a deeper functional explanation of genres including observations from the above-mentioned areas, particularly sociology. That development (from "thin description" to "thick description") is the main object of the review by Jan Engberg in this issue of *Hermes*. Thus, the main goal of genre analysis is not to find out how genres are written but why they are written the

way they are.[1] Chapter 2 defines the term *non-fictional genre* according to Swales (1990) and discusses its strengths and weaknesses. To put it briefly, according to Bhatia "Swales offers a good fusion of linguistic and sociological factors in his definition of a genre" (Bhatia, 1993: 16), although psychological factors are underplayed and genre thus becomes a static concept as against a dynamic social process (Ibid.). Furthermore, this chapter briefly describes how some of the above-mentioned disciplines, namely linguistics, sociology, and psychology, perform genre analysis. Chapter 2.3 "Analysing unfamiliar genres" is the main concern of this review and will be described more detailed below. Chapter 2.4 contains a description of the importance of cross-cultural factors for genre analysis, and chapter 2.5 concludes, once again, that thick description/explanation is preferred to thin description/description.

Part two shows "Genre Analysis in Action" and it is "an illustration of the framework suggested in section 1" (Bhatia, 1993: 43). Chapter 3 analyses two seemingly different genres (sales promotion letters and job applications) in respect of their communicative purpose, their move-structure and the possibility for variation (flexibility in move-structure and cross-cultural variation) and argues that they really belong to the same genre as their communicative purposes are identical. Chapter 4 analyses two seemingly similar genres (research article abstracts and research article introductions) and argues that they belong to different genres because their communicative purposes differ. Chapter 5 investigates legal discourse in professional settings.

Part three ("Applications") shows ways of applying genre analysis to two fields, namely language teaching (Chapter 6) and language reform (Chapter 7).

Generally speaking, I think the work's highest achievement is that it combines "essential grammatical insights and adequate socio-cognitive and cultural explanation" (Bhatia, 1993: 1). In that respect, it agrees with the German LSP genre research tradition of Hoffmann 1985,

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[1]   Thus, 'why'-questions that express the purpose of the book are found throughout it, among them "Why do members of a specialist community write the way they do?" (p. 1), "... why a particular variety takes the form it does ... " (p. 6), "... why the members of a particular secondary culture write the way they do ..." (p. 9), "Why are specific discourse-genres written and used by the specialist communities the way they are?" (p. 11), and "Why do users of the genre use these features and not others?" (p. 18).

Baumann 1992, and, lately Göpferich 1995, just to name a few of the authors within German LSP genre research. In their terminology the dichotomy between grammatical or pure linguistic factors and socio-cognitive, cultural or extra-textual factors is called text internal and text external factors.

I would like to emphasize another feature of Bhatia's work that I find quite noteworthy. In his definition (inspired by Swales) genre is "primarily characterized by the communicative purpose(s) it is intended to fulfil." (Bhatia, 1993: 13). In that respect it does not necessarily differ much from many other definitions. But Bhatia does however provide us with a model that actually helps us determine the communicative purpose.[2] Contrary to most other genre analysis models I have seen, where the focus is on the linguistic, i.e. text internal, part of the investigation, this model has only two linguistic categories, though one of them is large and differentiated, (step 4 and 6) and five sociocultural, i.e. text external categories (steps 1-3, 5, and 7). Although intuition does play a role in Bhatia's model as it does in other models, the determination of the communicative purpose is operationalized by a detailed description of the steps. This particular aspect of genre analysis will be discussed further in Winni Johansen's review.

Although it may be a minor point, I found it slightly disturbing that the heading of section 2.3 "Analysing unfamiliar genres" is opposed to "a comprehensive investigation of any genre" in the very next line (Bhatia, 1993: 22). The model can be applied to any genre, as Bhatia points out himself, and not only to unfamiliar ones, so the heading is maybe a little inappropriate.

The genre analysis model developed by Bhatia is process-orientated and consists of seven steps:

Step 1 "Placing the given genre-text in a situational context" comprises "... placing the genre text (i.e., a typical representative example of the genre) intuitively in a situational context ... ", drawing on internal clues in the text, previous experience with similar texts and with the professional community, and encyclopaedic knowledge.

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2   It is not only German genre analysis that does not often offer a way of determining the purpose of a genre. In German translation theory, Reiß (1986) advocates that choices, which characterize the process of translating, should be made on the basis of the function or purpose of the text. But she does not, however, suggest *how* the function of a text could be determined.

Step 2 "Surveying existing literature" is probably particularly important for those "who do not belong to the relevant speech community" (Ibid.). It could thus be non-obligatory to those who are members of the discourse community in question (cf. "one needs to consider some or all of the following seven steps" (Ibid.)). The literature that should be surveyed comprises among other things linguistic analyses of the genre in question, tools/methods/theories of genre analysis, practitioner advice, guide books, manuals etc. relevant to the speech community, and literature on the social structure, interactions, history, beliefs, goals etc. of the professional community.

Step 3 "Refining the situational/contextual analysis" requires that the speaker/writer, audience, their relationship and goals, and the historical, socio-cultural, philosophic and/or occupational placement of the relevant community should be defined. It also requires the identification of the network of surrounding texts and linguistic traditions that form the background to this particular genre-text and the extra-textual reality which the text is trying to represent, change or use. Thus, defining, describing and confirming or disproving the first intuitive findings from step 1 is the aim of step 3. Coming from the German tradition where genre analysis is quite closely related to text typology and classification, and well knowing that this is not the case in the Anglo-Saxon tradition ("Genre analysts [...] finally destroy the myth [...] that genre analysis necessarily has something to do with constructing a classification of genres." (Swales, 1990: 44)), I would nevertheless like a more strict definition of and distinction between discourse, register, genre, sub-genre and variety. After all, "identifying the network of surrounding texts" (Bhatia, 1993: 23) is in fact the very same thing as constructing a classification of genres.

In step 4 "Selecting corpus" one should define the genre in question well enough to distinguish it from closely related genres. Here Bhatia "admits" that a definition of genre cannot necessarily always exclusively be based on the communicative purpose alone (Ibid.), but also can be based on the situational context(s), some distinctive textual characteristics or some combination of these, in other words a multicriterial definition, which in German linguistics is supported by Heinemann/Viehweger (1991) among others. Furthermore, the criteria for defining the genre should be clearly stated, and criteria must be decided on for selection of examples: a long single typical text, a few randomly chosen

or a large statistical sample. It is gratifying to see that, contrary to an unfortunately still common belief and widespread misunderstanding, corpus' may consist of one, a few or a large number of text. If a corpus always had to be of a certain extent it would imply that one particular method is intended, and that would be a tacit methodological predetermination. Only one "long single typical text for detailed analysis" (Bhatia, 1993: 24) is also a corpus, just a small one. One must only bear in mind that the size of one's sample has to correspond to the method one is applying: one text for detailed analysis, a few texts for exploratory investigation, and a large statistical sample for an investigation of a few features.

Step 5 "Studying the institutional context" recommends that the analyst studies the institutional context, including the system, in which the genre is used and the linguisitic, social, cultural, academic, professional rules and conventions. This step becomes important especially if the data are collected from a particular organization, which often has its own organizational constraints for genre construction.

Step 6 "Levels of linguistic analysis" is divided into three sub-levels, the explanatory force of which increase with each sub-level. Level 1 "Analysis of lexico-grammatical features" is basically a statistical analysis of frequency of syntactic properties that provides empirical evidence to confirm or disprove intuitive statements that one makes. However, it only describes how genres are written, it does not explain why they are written the way they are. Level 2 "Analysis of text-patterning or textualization" deals with the tactical aspect of genre by focusing on how certain linguistic features are used in different genres in order to achieve different things. Level 3 "Structural interpretation of the text-genre" deals with the cognitive aspect and aims at the identification of the genre-text's cognitive move-structure[3] (Swales, 1990): each move serves a typical communicative intention which is always subservient to the overall communicative purpose of the genre.

Step 7 "Specialist information in genre analysis" suggests that the analyst consults a specialist informant, typically a practising member of

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[3] *Move-structure* basically corresponds to the German term *Makrostruktur* (not to be confused with the van Dijkan concept of macrostructure which represents the attempt to establish a structure that fits any (narrative) text) which is the linear and hierarchical structure of a genre-text.

the discourse community, who confirms, rejects, validates or corrects the analyst's findings and provides him with supplementary information. Here it might be added that a specialist informant is even more likely to put constraints on a genre (individual constraints) than an organization that submits a genre to organizational constraints. It would therefore possibly be advisable to consult more than one specialist informant. This particular aspect of genre analysis will be discussed further in Finn Frandsen's review.

Although the seven steps are mentioned one after another that does not imply that the analysis should be carried out in exactly that order, nor that every step should necessarily be actually carried out in an analysis. Though that might be the reason why I got the impression that there is a certain degree of overlapping in the steps, I think other factors might play a role.

The overlapping might be related to the fact that the seven steps are not categorized. A distinction between the steps of text external investigation (steps 1-3, 5 and 7) and text internal investigation (step 4 and 6) would be advisable. As mentioned above, I think that one of the best things about the model is that it so strongly stresses the importance of text external features in genre analysis. But a categorization would firstly show how strong that emphasis is (five steps vs two steps, though one of the two is a large and differentiated one) and would secondly show that there is indeed a certain degree of overlap. For instance, surveying (text external) literature on the speech community in general is a part of step 1 and of step 2, where additionally (text internal) literature linguistic analyses is to be consulted. The most obvious example would be the investigation of the discourse community in general, which is carried out in steps 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7. So as Bhatia says himself, the steps must not necessarily be followed in that order.

What is more interesting is that the steps are not necessarily linear in nature. It is a question of distinguishing between the process of analysing and the result of the analysis. The process and the description of it are linear or chronological. But I think that the result, i.e. the profile of the genre itself, is not linear, but is interdependent, complex, multidisciplinary and hierarchical in its structure and nature. Of course, you have to do things in a chronological order. But I think that simultaneously following some steps, shifting back and forth and thus making use of the dialectical mechanisms would maybe be an advantage. In

that way, you could also spot the cases of overlap although of course it might prove fruitful to investigate for instance the discourse community from various angles in step 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7. In my opinion, some of the steps or parts of them could be put together resulting in a hierarchical structure that allows two main categories (text internal and text external) and several sub-categories.

Concluding, I would like to say that the analysis model suggested by Bhatia is very operational, practical, and plausible. It provides the analyst with a tool that enables him to define and investigate any genre (and not only the unfamiliar ones!). It could be sharpened, though, if the steps were revised and redundancies removed, and if the steps could be categorized into text external and text internal areas, thus making the whole model less linear and more flexible and avoiding unfruitful and redundant overlapping. Overlapping and repetition are not necessarily such a bad thing. Investigating something from various angles may prove fruitful and show the way to new insights. But this bluntness is by no means crucial, because the emphasis on the text external factors in combination with the text internal ones, at the same time seeking explanation sooner than description, is a really good way of reaching a better understanding of the notion of genre and different concrete genres - step by step, so to speak.

Martin Nielsen

The Purpose of the Communicative Purpose

The communicative purpose plays an important role in Bhatia's definition of genre. Bhatia elaborates on the genre definition of John Swales (1981, 1985 and 1990) in the following way:

> Genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s) (Bhatia, 1993: 13).

And he goes on saying that:

> the genre is primarily characterized by the communicative purpose(s) that it is intended to fulfil. This shared set of communicative purpose(s) shapes the genre and gives it an internal structure. Any major change in the communicative purpose(s) is likely to give us a different genre; however minor changes or modifications help us distinguish sub-genres (Ibid.).

In other words, a genre is defined by its conventionalized communicative purposes shared by the discourse community of a given genre. Through these conventions the discourse community influences the text-patterning.

Compared to other models of text analysis Bhatia has made an interesting contribution to genre analysis by creating (with Swales) a model that goes far beyond a lexico-grammatical description of language use in a given genre by incorporating the text-external context, i.e. institutional and situational aspects, according to the thick description concept.

Another interesting aspect in his approach to genre analysis is the status of the communicative purposes. They have a socially communicative status which means that it is socially recognized conventions rather than private intentions that are structuring a given text-genre. So it is not the psychological and personal views of people (writers) that are the determining factors. There might be private intentions at work

for the members of the discourse community, but within the framework of the socially recognized purpose(s).

But in what way are the communicative purposes contributing to the structuring of the genre? Along with Swales, Bhatia distinguish between three interrelated elements: *communicative purposes, moves and rhetorical strategies*. The communicative purposes constitute the overall criteria for a given text-genre and serve the organization of a text into a number of components by Bhatia called *moves*. In addition to this, the individual writer may use different rhetorical strategies in order to achieve these moves and purposes. The examples given by Bhatia of rhetorical strategies have primarily a linguistic nature, e.g. he refers to rhetorical strategies like the choice of a 'you' or 'we'-orientation to the addressee in a sales promotion letter or the use of a specific vocabulary, etc.

Moves are discriminative elements of generic structure (Bhatia, 1993: 32), i.e. if they vary significantly, it may give a different genre or sub-genre. By contrast, rhetorical strategies reflecting the choices of the individual writer in order to serve his private intentions are non-discriminative strategies which means that they do not influence/vary the nature of a genre.

It is a relatively easy model to go to, especially in a learning process perspective. In fact, the pedagogical aspect is the strength of the model. In his book, Bhatia gives instructions how to reveal the move structure of a text-genre and gives, furthermore, examples of linguistic rhetorical strategies used in different genres. Nevertheless the type and use of rhetorical strategies do need further accounting. Does his concept of rhetorical strategies include non-verbal strategies as well - like for instance pictures and lay-out features which are in fact very often used for a specific communicative purpose in specific genres? If he intends the widest possible definition of *rhetorical strategy*, it includes every type of verbal and/or non-verbal strategy used to achieve a certain move structure and thereby to realize the communicative purposes. The vagueness of Bhatia concerning a definition of, and a more or less systematic accounting for rhetorical strategies may have to do with the fact that there are quite often a considerable number of rhetorical strategies at work. In fact, the number of possible rhetorical strategies is so abundant

that they may constitute a theme of themselves for another book of genre analysis.[4]

The genre analysis of Bhatia can be said to belong to the field of applied discourse analysis, and Bhatia does refer to discourse analysis as his point of departure, but he does not refer to a real model of communication. This lack of theoretical foundation is reflected e.g. in the somewhat vague and fuzzy notion of communicative purpose. Bhatia is right about the communicative purposes being determining for the structure of a given genre, but how are we to decide and determine the content of the communicative purposes of a given genre?

Although Bhatia gives different examples to illustrate the use of this notion (for instance by describing the communicative purposes of sales promotion letters, research articles and legal texts), it does not become clear if there is a systematic or logical way of doing this. He distinguish between main purpose and additional purposes (Bhatia, 1993: 60) i.e. he works with a certain hierarchy of purposes, but again it is not quite clear how he gets to this hierarchy. To give an example: Bhatia describes the communicative purposes of the genre 'sales promotion letters'. Such letters have the following purposes:

> The main function of a sales promotion letter is persuasive in the sense that it's writer aims to elicit a specific response from its reader(s) (Bhatia, 1993: 45-46).

and the following additional purposes

> 1) appraisal of the product or service , 2) the letter must be short and effective and 3) the letter must serve as first link between seller and customer and encourage further communication (Ibid.).

As it may appear, he speaks of main *function*, so now text type functions are used as equivalent to purposes which adds another aspect to the conceptual confusion.

Concerning the second additional purpose 'that the letter must be short and effective' is strictly speaking not a communicative purpose. In my opinion, the purpose is rather to get the attention of the addressee

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[4] In Frandsen, Johansen & Nielsen (1997) Bhatia's model of genre analysis has been worked into a semiotic interactionnel model of communication serving as basis for analyses of the genres of market communication. Futhermore, Frandsen, Johansen & Nielsen elaborate on the notion of rhetorical strategies in accounting for some of the most important strategies used in different genres of market communication.

and to get him to read the letter, whereas 'being short and effective' is a linguistic instrument (a rhetorical strategy) of achieving this purpose.

In short, the confusion as to the determination of the communicative purpose is a main problem. Which are the elements or aspects helping us to determine the communicative purpose. Is it the sender? The relation between the sender and the addressee? Is it the situational circumstances like choice of media or factors like: what the text is going to be used for and who is the reader? Or is it a mixture of all factors (linguistic and extra-linguistic/contextual factors)?

The pragmatic way of establishing the communicative purposes makes it difficult to get to an agreement as to the typology of genres. One possible way of getting to know the communicative purposes would be to compare a number of texts from one genre to bring out the move structure (obligatory and facultative moves) to be able to deduce the purposes. However, according to Bhatia it should be the other way around. To him, knowledge about the communicative purposes of a genre will tell about the move structure and the text patterning of this genre.

Another problem in the genre analysis of Bhatia is the confusion as to the genre object levels. It is not always quite clear what object level Bhatia uses for his illustrations. Some times the use of genre is subject to confusion due to the object level. At least a hierarchy of three levels can be found: i.e. the level of super- or macro-genres, the level of genres and the level of sub-genres. Some times, these levels get mixed up. Different attempts at making a genre typology show that is possible to use different object levels. To this problem Bhatia has a pragmatic attitude, in arguing that the individual genre analyst can decide for himself the object level of his/her typology. According to this the promotional genre can be regarded as a genre that implies a number of sub-genres such as advertisements, company brochures, annual reports, etc. or the promotional genre can be regarded as a super-genre that can be divided into a number of genres (letters, brochures, reports etc.) that again can be divided into sub-genres (e.g. the genre of company brochures belong to the promotional genre but can themselves be categorized in product brochures and image brochures).

A group of texts having a shared set of communicative purposes belong to the same genre according to Bahtia, but major/minor changes in

moves and purposes may cause a change of genre or sub-genre (Bhatia, 1993: 13). However, it is often quite difficult to determine whether two texts belong to the same genre or to the same sub-genre, because 'major/ minor changes' is a relative conception. To this problem Bhatia makes the following comment:

> However, it must be admitted that it seems almost impossible to draw up clearly defined criteria to make a satisfactory distinction between genres and sub-genres (Bhatia, 1993: 21).

To Bhatia, although sales promotion letters and job applications belong to the same genre, he does recognize that some differences in moves can be found. In my opinion these differences are however of major importance, which means that they belong to two different genres. Sales promotion letters and job applications have a common overall purpose or goal, namely to promote a product/company or a person and that is why they can be said to belong to the same super-genre, the promotional genre, but they differ in relation to some of the communicative purposes and hereby form two different text-genres. The sales promotion letter is the first link between seller and buyer, the buyer does not expect the letter to come, so one of the purposes is to get him to read this letter. On the other hand a job application constitutes the second link in being a text responding to a job advertisement i.e. the purpose of the application is to respond to a proposition from someone who deliberately asks for and expects an answer, i.e. he wants to read the application. Therefore we can point out differences in purposes or at least in the additional purposes and the move structure. If we regard the promotional genre as a supergenre, sales promotion letters and job applications can be considered as separate genres. On the other hand if you regard the promotional genre as a simple genre, sales promotion letters and job applications may constitute sub-genres. By the way, Bhatia chooses to name them 'instances of promotional genres' (Ibid.: 74) and in this way he adds another notion to the conceptual confusion.

According to Bhatia, scientific and academic introductions to research articles form a separate genre. This means that a whole cohesive text can be split into different genres, and small parts of a text like the back-ground description and conclusion become separate genres. To me, scientific introductions to research article are equivalent of what you may call one macro-move in the genre 'research articles' and this macro-move can be divided into micro-moves or sub-moves. Some

genres are that extensive that is appropriate to distinguish between macro- and micro-moves, and I do agree that for pedagogical reasons it might be appropriate to divide a text into smaller parts, but without naming it genres.

The contribution that Bhatia has made to genre analysis is a very constructive attempt to develop a model capable of capturing social conventions linked to genres. His approach is very well adapted for educational purposes, easy to go to with many detailed examples of how to do the analysis. It might be these pedagogical considerations that have caused the suppression of an overall theoretical discussion. Communicative purposes, moves and rhetorical strategies are clarified through detailed analyses of different genres like sales promotion letters, job applications, science research articles and legal documents. A more accurate definition of communicative purposes and especially a more precise description of how to determine these purposes, as well as a more consistent distinction between main purposes and additional purposes on the one hand and between supergenres, genres and sub-genres on the other, would make the model even more easy to work with. Greater clarity and accuracy might be achieved through references to a theoretical communication model.

Winni Johansen

Thick Descriptions

One of the important issues Bhatia points out as characteristic of genre analysis is the 'thickness' of the description. He relates this quality to the notion of thick descriptions by Geertz (1973). By *thick descriptions* Bhatia understands the combination of descriptions at several levels, especially formal descriptions combined with communicative, cognitive and socio-cultural descriptions. Through such combined descriptions it is possible to achieve explanations of formal linguistic characteristics. Such explanations are very useful for the teaching of LSP, as they enable a teaching of the rationale behind the formulation of specific texts - and the human mind is especially well prepared for such tasks. Bhatia consequently points out this characteristic of genre analysis as one of the most important developments within applied language description. I totally agree with this point of view. By concentrating on language use within a special situation, as this is done when analysing professional genres, the analyst achieves a limitation of linguistic variability, both concerning form and possible meanings. These limitations make postulates about correlative relations between characteristics of different levels easier to make. One example is the explanation of the text structuring of English legal provisions in terms of the cognitive relations between a provisonary clause and qualifications narrowing the scope of the provision to the specific provisionary clause. The different kinds of provisions are described and explained in terms of the special communicative purposes fulfilled by legal provisions (Bhatia, 1993: 116), just as the rather complex nominal phrases found in such texts are seen as reflections of the need to relate different parts of the provision to each other (Bhatia, 1993: 158). Despite the undisputed value of the combination of descriptions within genre analysis, I still see two possible problems which I would like to present in some more detail. I am thinking of the following points:

1) The basis of interrelating the levels of description is vague.
2) The thick description is inherently local (specific for a certain situation) - is this adequate for language teaching?

Problem 1: On what grounds are the levels of description interrelated in the thick description?

In the explanatory descriptions carried out in the book under review, Bhatia relates communicative, social, and to a certain extent cognitive elements to the way texts are formulated. This is done on an intuitive basis, i.e. without an explicit theory about the grounds on which the interrelation is based. The results presented by Bhatia are convincing, and thus already these results may fulfil Bhatia's purpose, namely to help develop language teaching in a more practical way than through system linguistic theories. But in my opinion we cannot leave the matter here. We need to have a tool other than pure common sense to be able to evaluate our intuition. Otherwise we will never be able to achieve more knowledge about the more profound characteristics of genre, and at least a linguistic genre analysis should not give up this goal. Theory and practice should cooperate and develop mutually.

As a solution to this problem, I would suggest including the semantic framework when working with communicative and socio-cultural aspects. The reason for this suggestion is that the relations in these areas exist between the text and aspects of the world, i.e. are reflection of aspects of the world in the text. And these are to be found in the semantic of the texts. In this connection the relations between general and specific word meanings are of special interest. Concerning the cognitive aspects, cognitive linguistics which tries to establish relations between the functioning of the brain and the structures of texts and sentences seem promising disciplines to take up.

Problem 2: Thick description is inherently local and infinite - a problem to language teaching?

An important task for language teaching must be not only to enable students to communicate within a small domain of genres treated in class, but also to give learners a basic knowledge of a specific language system, which they can use in other tasks. As far as I can see, Bhatia's genre analysis in principle does not care about a basic system. The idea of thick description is connected to explaining formal characteristics of a specific genre by looking at the specific situation of this genre. This means that genre analysis is inherently local (concentrates on the treated instances). But in its last consequence, this would mean that the teacher has to work with a lot of genres in class, in order for the students to learn for example English. As this is not the optimal case, and certainly not necessary, either - human beings are able to draw analogies,

and they do all the times, building hypotheses about language regularities - I believe that we should also emphasise the global aspect, the more general features, also if this means that we will have to give up giving thick descriptions of these features.

Connected to the aspect of locality is the aspect of inherent infinity of thick description. This goes especially for the communicative functions: as the number of communicative functions which may be fulfilled by texts are virtually infinite, there is no given limit as to what has to be learnt in order to be able to speak and understand English. In this area, too, some theoretical afterthought is necessary in order to guide the genre analysis and its application to language teaching.

I see the aspect of thick description as one of the most positive and important features of genre analysis. But as I have tried to point out it does carry some problems which we should try to solve in order to give the notion of genre its correct place in teaching and in linguistic text and genre theory.

Jan Engberg

The Use of Specialist Informants in Genre Analysis

As is well known, linguists have at their disposal different data sources on which they can base their research. The three most important sources are:

- introspection, where the linguist exploits his own knowledge of language,
- multispection, where informants are used as test persons, and
- various kinds of corpora, from traditional collections of examples to large computer-based corpora.

However, not all these data sources can be used within all the branches of modern linguistics. Their use depends very much on the aspect of language on has chosen to study. If the linguist studies the linguistic competence or the language system, he can use all the data sources mentioned above. But if the linguist studies the language use in specific contexts, and this applies to the study of the "language use in professional settings" in particular, introspection is no longer possible, unless the linguist has received training within the profession in question, which is a rare thing.

In the model for the analysis of genres that Vijay Bhatia puts forward in *Analysing Genre*, one is recommended (in step 4) to establish a text corpus and (in step 7) to use specialist informants. Below I shall concentrate on the methodological problems connected with the use of such specialist informants.

Informants are used with the purpose of *interpreting* and *validating* the data or findings that the linguist has reached in his description. This is also the case in genre analysis:

> "the analyst double checks his findings against reactions from a specialist informant, who, generally, is a practising member of the disciplinary culture in which the genre is routinely used. The specialist reaction confirms his findings, brings validity to his insights and adds psychological reality to his analysis. It is an important aspect of genre analysis, if one wishes to bring in relevant explanation rather than mere description in one's analysis" (Bhatia, 1993: 34).

In this context, Bhatia refers to studies done by Selinker (1979), Tarone et al. (1981), Huckin & Olsen (1984) and by himself (Bhatia 1982),

where specialist informants either have helped discourse or genre analysts to interpret and understand scientific articles which are not accessible to non-specialists or have been followed during their daily work for a long period of time.

Bhatia doesn't hide that there are difficulties in using specialist informants in genre analysis. Firstly, it may be difficult to find a suitable specialist informant, as far as this person must fulfill the following three demands:

> "1. Be a competent and trained specialist member of the disciplinary culture in which the genre under study is routinely used. 2. Have a feel for the specialist language and also be prepared to talk about it openly, when asked searching questions about various aspects of the genre under study. 3. Be in a position to explain clearly what he believes expert members of the disciplinary culture do when they exploit language in order to accomplish their generic goals" (Bhatia, 1993: 35-36).

Secondly, it takes a lot of time and work to develop a mutual understanding between the specialist informant and the genre analyst for the purpose of the research project in which the specialist informant participates. Bhatia (1993: 36) gives good suggestions as to how to exploit the expertise and the specialist informants in the most appropriate way: the genre analyst has to have a clear idea of what he is looking for; the questions he brings up must be sufficiently open, even though specific questions may prevent the discussion from running out of control; in some cases it can be useful to consult more than one specialist informant, etc.

This is not to say that all difficulties have disappeared. One of the premises for using specialist informants in genre analysis is the complete congruity between the conventions (e.g. the communicative purpose) actually realized in the genre and the specialist's knowledge of these conventions. This works best of all in discourse communities and in genres where the conventions are clear, unambiguous and explicit (possibly written down), and where you find some kind of formalized learning af the conventions, e.g. in academic discourse communities.

But there is not always such a complete congruity. The specialist's knowledge of the genre conventions may be insufficient or even "wrong". If his knowledge is insufficient, we are only facing the problem mentioned above of how to find an appropriate specialist infor-

mant. On the contrary, if his knowledge is "wrong", we are facing a far more serious problem.

The problem is connected with how we conceive and define the specialist's knowledge of genre conventions. On one hand, we may assume that this knowledge only includes a purely *operational knowledge*, that is: the knowledge that is necessary for the production and reception of the genre in question within the discourse community in question, and therefore, in principle, it can never be wrong, inasmuch the informant in this case no longer could be regarded as a valid member of the discourse community.

On the other hand, we could also assume that specialist's knowledge includes more than just an operational knowledge. Every language user - as member of different discourse communities (from the national discourse community to professional communities) - makes a *representation* of his own way of using language. This representation consists among other things of ideas about the "type of language" in question (the language conception or "spontaneous linguistics" of the user) and about "good" and "bad" language use (the linguistic norms of the user). And all the genres that the language user produces or receives as a member of one or more discourse communities are also object of representations.

I have myself studied the journalist's representation of their own language use in the form of an analysis of both their language conception and their linguistic norms as these are formulated by themselves in journalistic handbooks and reference books in Denmark and France (see Frandsen 1996). This analysis shows first of all that concerning medium journalists conceive their language use as being closer related to spoken language than to written language and that concerning the status of their language as a language for special purposes they rather conceive it as being a LGP (a "language of experience") than a LSP (a "language of knowledge"). Secondly, it also results from the analysis that journalists very often operate with a clear normative distinction between good journalistic language use and bad journalistic language use ("journalese"). This normative distinction is also applied to the journalistic genres but in a somewhat different way. See for example Martin-Lagardette (1987: 73-109) who distinguishes between informative genres, commenting genres, "les genres de fantaisie" and what he calls "les genres 'nobles'" (enquete, reportage, interview).

However, anybody who has tried to analyse just a single aspect of the actual language use of journalists knows that this representation doesn't correspond to reality. There is neither question of spoken language nor of a language for general purposes, but of a specific form of written language that is answering specific communicative purposes and that has been constituted over a historical period of time in connection with the creation of journalism as both a profession and a discourse community.

If we supplement the specialist informant's operational knowledge of the genre conventions used within his discourse community with the specialist informant's representation of his own way of using language - a representation that even may be "wrong" - this will have important methodological consequences. Because if so, one can no longer use the specialist informant's knowledge in order to validate the findings of the discourse or genre analyst. On the contrary, this knowledge must be considered as data in the same way as the data which the analyst has reached in his description of the genres.

The question of how to use specialist informants in genre analysis is of course only a minor question, but nonetheless an important one. The solution of the methodological problems connected with this step in the model proposed by Bhatia will inevitably influence our way of conceiving and defining another important concept in genre analysis, that is the concept of *discourse community*. In their introduction of this concept neither Bhatia (1993) nor Swales (1990) who is the main source for this concept tell us anything about the members' representation of their language use or discourse. By adding this representation to the purely operational knowledge of the members, whether this representation is in conflict or not with their actual language use, the concept of discourse community is extended with a new dimension.

Finn Frandsen

Analysing Genre Revisited

I am grateful to the editors for inviting me to contribute to the review article on my book *Analysing Genre – Language Use in Professional Settings*, giving me an opportunity to respond to the reviews from scholars and researchers in the field of text and genre analysis. .

The review article has raised interesting issues concerning the use of the proposed framework for analysing genre. There has been a lot more research done since the publication of the book and my own thinking on some of these issues has further developed, even changed in some sense. The review article has prompted me to revisit the familiar territory in analysing genre in the context of the questions raised in some of these insightful perceptions of the generic framework. I would like to take up some of the more general issues first before I can take up the more specific ones.

Overview

I must admit that the way genre framework was developed and illustrated through a number of analyses of texts had a number of considerations. One of the most obvious one was that in an introductory framework for applied genre analysis, I was mainly guided by the concerns of applied linguists, especially the LSP teachers, writing specialists and language reformers in legal contexts. A necessary consequence of this approach was that it was necessary to keep in mind the background and shared knowledge of an average language teacher and also the concerns of legal specialists. I probably was driven to what may appear to be a somewhat unrealistic position from where I thought it was not only impossible to account for the complex realities of the academic and professional world, but undesirable too. Although, it is well-known that expert users of professional genres do exploit generic resources to fulfil their own "private intentions", for language teaching purposes, this was not necessarily the foremost priority. The result of this kind of prioritisation was that the analysis seems to give a somewhat misleading impression of the real world of professional discourse as rather simple and straightforward, whereas in actual fact, the realities of the world of work are far more complex, dynamic and ever-changing (see Bhatia, 1995).

Similar applied linguistic concerns also required of the framework to be least demanding in respect of theory building, especially in the context of existing linguistic and communication frameworks. Keeping in mind the way some of the current linguistic frameworks have become increasingly formal and extremely complex, my main concern was not to develop generic framework as an extension of one linguistic or communication framework or the other. Most ordinary LSP practitioners have neither enough background nor time to acquire such expertise in formal linguistics. So, my main concern was to use linguistic insights only to the extent they were considered absolutely crucial. Therefore if some scholars find the model either lacking in lexico-semantic rigour or somewhat light in terms of theoretical objectivity, it was intended to be so. Moreover, although linguistic descriptions, especially based on formal criteria, may appear to be theoretically sound, at least to those who have a long investment in formal linguistics, to me personally, such descriptions are not entirely satisfactory. The key to insightful and satisfactory studies of discourse and genres is neither objectivity nor completeness of description, but an insightful explanation of "why is a particular genre written the way it is?" The nature of genre analysis is neither entirely linguistic nor formalistic, but essentially qualitative and interdisciplinary, which is better served by the application of a triangulation of objective as well as subjective criteria. Human communication is potentially imprecise, ambiguous and dynamic, and hence adaptable, even in institutionalised contexts, and most expert users of professional genres know how to exploit them to achieve the goals of the professional community they are members of. They are able to do that because of the knowledge of the professionally relevant genres they have acquired as a result of the process of institutionalisation they have gone through. It is important to know that although linguistic knowledge plays a significant role in the process of genre construction, interpretation and use, it is only a part of a much wider concept of genre knowledge, which is essentially interdisciplinary, conventional and yet socially negotiable. Let me take up some of the more specific issues raised in the reviews.

Versatility in Genre

One of the important issues raised in the reviews concerns the status of super-genres, genres and sub-genres. I understand the concern expres-

sion by Winni Johansen that it is difficult to arrive at a classification of professional genres in a clear-cut and objective manner, and that the generic boundaries between and across genres are even more difficult to mark. In fact, in whatever manner one may define genre, the boundaries between different levels of genre will always be difficult to draw. It has very little to do with the framework one uses; but more to do with the complex and dynamic variation and constant development of generic forms used within and across disciplinary cultures. As pointed out in several studies (see Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993, 1995), genre analysis is not classificatory but clarificatory. In fact, the concept of genre needs to be versatile enough to be able to account for the complex realities of the real world. I have pointed out elsewhere (Bhatia, 1997), there are a number of terms of common currency which have found their way into present-day generic terminology. *Introduction* is one of them. *Report,* could be another. *Promotion* is yet another. These and many other generic constructs of this kind can be posited at various levels of generalisation. *Introductions,* for example, can be considered a kind of genre colony which can give rise to several realisations, most of them closely related, and yet having subtle variations. One could c*onsider introducing a friend, introducing a speaker in a symposium or a political meeting, introducing a business proposition, introducing a new product in the market, introducing a new book, a new research finding in a research article, a point of view in a student essay*, and several other introductions of this kind. All these are closely related genres. To take a more specific case, let us look at *academic introductions* more closely. Under this category of genres, we again find a number of variations, some easily distinguishable, other more difficult to identify. The picture that emerges will look something like this.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  ACADEMIC INTRODUCTIONS │
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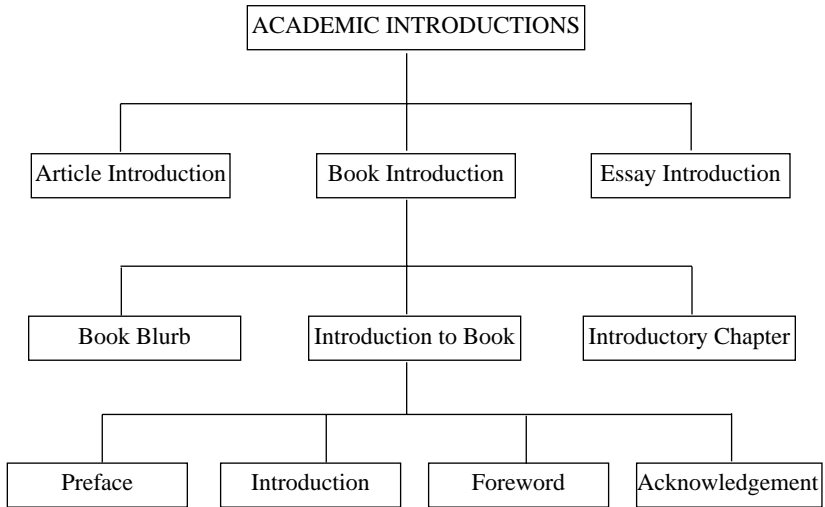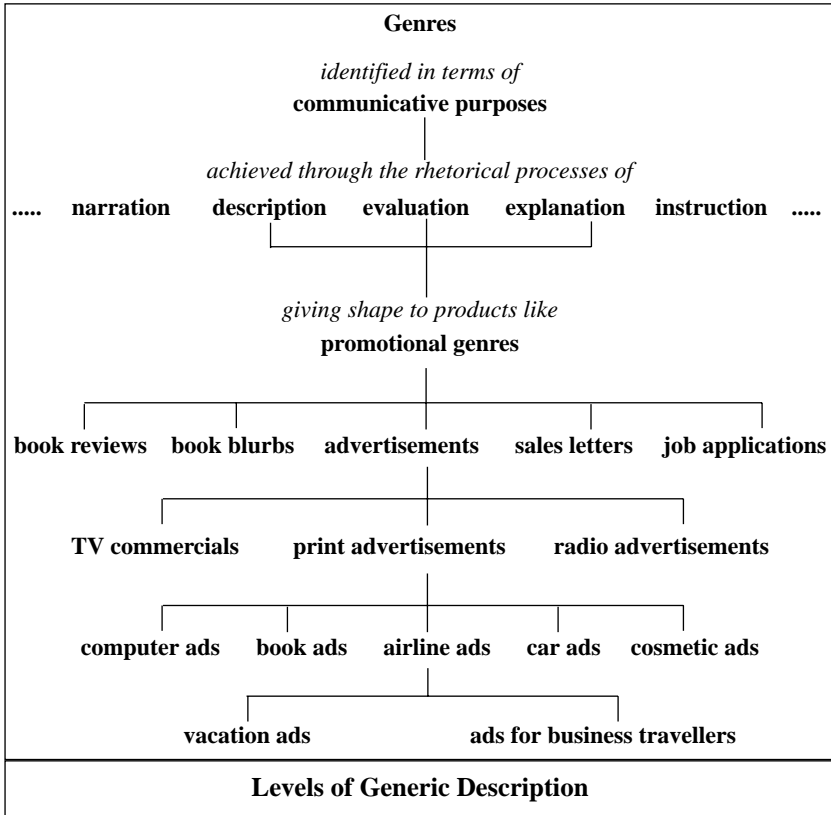
Figure 1: Variation in Academic Introductions

Similarly, *reporting genres* present an interesting picture. At the top level, one could consider *business reports*, *law reports*, *accident reports*, *first information reports* (FIR), *inquiry reports*, etc., most of them have interesting parallels. However, one could go further down the line and identify variations within *business reports*, for example, *company report*, *financial report*, *feasibility report*, *investigation report*, *annual report*, etc. The same will be true of a number of other super-genres, or genre-colonies. *Promotional genres*, for instance, can subsume a variety of significantly related genres like *advertisements* (print, TV or radio), *sales letters*, *company brochures*, *job applications*, etc. at the top level of generalisation. One could even establish an interesting relationship between genres like *reviews* (books, films, gourmet, events (social, academic, business, etc.) and more specific *promotional genres*. At a more specific level, advertisements could be further distinguished in terms of the medium, the nature of product being promoted, or even the kind of audience it is targeted at.

Genres

identified in terms of
communicative purposes

achieved through the rhetorical processes of

.....   **narration**   **description**   **evaluation**   **explanation**   **instruction**   .....

giving shape to products like
promotional genres

book reviews   **book blurbs**   **advertisements**   **sales letters**   **job applications**

TV commercials   **print advertisements**   **radio advertisements**

computer ads   **book ads**   **airline ads**   **car ads**   **cosmetic ads**

vacation ads   **ads for business travellers**

Levels of Generic Description

The classification shows that although genres are products of specific (combinations of) rhetorical values that linguistic forms attract in discourse, they are primarily identified in terms of the communicative purposes these forms of discourse serve in specific disciplinary and professional contexts. At the super-genre level, these can be called promotional genres, at the next lower level of generalisation, they have a range of closely related genres, which include book reviews, book blurbs, advertisements, sales letters, job application letters and many more of this kind, some very closely related, others no so. Although all of them have their typical lexico-grammatical and stylistic realisations, they still have a lot in common to justify their inclusion within the same colony of genres. Going down to the next level of generalisation, each instance of genre can be seen to include several examples of sub-

genres, which are essentially identified with reference to other factors of contextualisation, either field, mode, tenor, or others. One of the interesting aspects of this is that there are several layers of generalisations and it is possible to posit these layers in different ways.

This kind of complex and yet very subtle variation at different levels of generalisation makes it almost impossible for any specific framework to devise objective criteria to account for their identification and classification. Although a number of factors, linguistic, contextual, socio-cognitive as well as discipline specific, will help the analyst to explain this kind of variation (which may include genre-mixing and embedding, and also what Fairclough (1992) calls "marketization" or "hybridization"), none of these, on its own can satisfactorily account for the integrity of these realisations. It will also be impossible to devise a hierarchy of genres, except in a very general sense. One could posit at least three distinct levels, for example, super-genres, genres and sub-genres. Promotional genres, reporting genres, academic genres, introductory genres, etc. can all be considered under super-genres, which are seen as colonies of several related genres, sometimes at various levels of generalisations. Sub-genres, on the other hand, are those instances of genres which share the same set of communicative purposes but are distinguished in terms of other contextual factors, like the medium, the audience, the tenor etc.

This gives genre a certain degree of versatility, which is extremely useful for a number of applications, especially in the context of LSP, where one needs to constantly negotiate the angle of LSP courses to meet specific requirements of LSP professionals in the context of a broad disciplinary vision.

Communicative Purposes

How do we identify communicative purposes, especially when texts can perform an infinite number of them? Is there a systematic and logical way of determining them? Which factors are more crucial, text-internal or text-external?

These are a set of interesting questions, but not necessarily easy to answer. The status of communicative purpose as such has rarely been questioned in the existing literature. There are difficulties however, in their identification, especially if one is looking for a clear-cut, definite

and objective criteria. Unfortunately, for many of us, whether genre analysts or LSP teachers, it has always been difficult to identify genre-specific communicative purposes because more often than not, we have no first-hand knowledge of the discursive practices of the specialist community we are supposed to deal with. We are not part of the community of knowledge of the genres we are concerned with. Although we can claim to have expertise in the use of language and linguistics, and linguistic signals do reflect communicative purposes, they often need to be interpreted in the context of the goals of the specialist communities which use these genres.

Although, text-internal factors are important for the identification of communicative purposes, they can give misleading insights when used on their own. Textual factors typically depend on their form-function correlation and it is not always possible to have one-to-one correlation in this area. There are linguistic forms which can attract several discoursal values; on the other hand, a particular discourse value can be realised through several syntactic forms. However, it is not a free-for-all kind of situation. Linguistic forms do carry specific generic values, but the only way one can assign the right generic value to any linguistic feature of the genre is by reference to text-external factors. Similarly, any conclusion arrived at purely on the basis of text-external factors needs to be confirmed by reference to text-internal factors. Bhatia (1992) discusses the case of complex nominals in three different genres: advertising, academic scientific genres and legislation, on the basis of which he concludes that although one may find an above-average use of complex nominals in the three genres, their form, distribution and generic values are very different in the three cases.

The other interesting aspect of communicative purpose is that although they can be specified in general terms, they can also be considered in terms of an increasing degree of specificity. According to the degree of specification, the genre can be identified either narrowly, or more broadly, which again will depend upon the objectives of the investigation. An interesting instance could be a study of job applications as a promotional genre. Winni Johansen points out that job applications and sales letters should be treated as different genres, because only one of them is solicited, and the other not. In the context of what we have just discussed, this could be taken as a minor difference in contextual configuration, although one should not rule out the possibility of a job

application being used in unsolicited contexts. Even assuming that only one of them is unsolicited, this will make only a minor difference in the communicative purpose, that too at a very specific subsidiary level. If the aim of research is to distinguish genres in this respect, then these will obviously offer interesting variation. On the other hand, it is possible to consider the two as instances of the same genre. The most important thing is that the framework allows the two instances to be investigated in two different ways. This certainly is a positive aspect of genre theory.

Hierarchy of genres

Nielsen seems to be happy with the multiple criteria for the identification of genre and communicative purpose, but would like to see a clear distinction between *genre*, *sub-genre*, *register*, *variety*, *discourse* etc. It will certainly be helpful if one could clearly distinguish these closely related and somewhat overlapping concepts. However, to define all these concepts more strictly and clearly could be anybodyís nightmare. There are as many definitions and interpretations as there are scholars. The most interesting thing is that in spite of the differences, insiders have a fairly good understanding of what these terms mean in existing literature. Any thing more specific will require a considerable effort and space. It is not simply a problem with these concepts. Other similar concepts, for example, *function*, *text*, *style*, *rhetoric* etc. have similar problems.

Network of surrounding texts, however has been used in a sense, slightly different from what Nielsen implies. The term incorporates all those texts, spoken as well as written, that offer some contribution or input to the construction and interpretation of the generic construct in question. The most immediate examples of surrounding texts will be the products of a variety of discursive procedures and processes that professionals engage in before and in the process of genre construction, interpretation and use. These surrounding texts will also include those texts or genres which may have some inter-textual or inter-discursive influence on the shaping of a specific generic construct. In addition, these will also incorporate related genres, which may have classificatory relationship with the genre in question. The idea is not to exclude related texts but to interpret the term in a broad sense.

The term *unfamiliar genre* has not been used to create an opposition to a *comprehensive investigation of genres*, as expressed by Nielsen. In fact, it is meant to be just the opposite of what Nielsen implies. The optimal strategy to follow all the seven steps in the case of unfamiliar genres implies that one could relax the requirements under certain steps if the analyst is already familiar with some of the necessary background knowledge in specific cases. Outlining seven steps for the investigation of genres gives it not only the most systematic but also the most comprehensive interpretation to the methodological procedures.

Specialist informants

Nielsen quite rightly suggests that it would be advisable to consult not one but two specialist informants. In fact, Huckin and Olsen (1984) also suggest the same thing. There is bound to be individual variation when one goes for specialist consultation. The more experienced and well-established the informant, the more individual variation and authority one is likely to find in their perceptions. However, it is always better to have specialist information from several sources than just one, or none at all. Finn Frandsen, in his review, raised somewhat similar concerns, especially on the possibility of specialist informants having inaccurate or even wrong perceptions of the practices of the members of a specific disciplinary culture. I agree with him. That certainly is the reason for being very careful about the choice of specialist informants. However, on the other hand, as Frandsen points out, it will be quite unrealistic to expect complete congruence in the perceptions of every specialist informant. Although, one the one hand, there is an expectation of common understanding, on the other hand, there is also a recognition of the fact that these disciplinary experts have a license to innovate and exploit established conventions for various reasons. This license for variation is likely to be more frequently exercised by those who are experienced and well-established in their discipline. In the final analysis therefore it is unrealistic to regard their perceptions as right or wrong. The main purpose is to get to know more about the discursive processes and practices of specialist communities as input to our understanding of the genres under investigation.

Steps to genre investigation

There is the question of overlap between the seven steps and also if these steps be better organised under text-internal and text-external categories. As Nielsen points out, generic investigation is not linear but interdependent, complex, multidisciplinary and hierarchical in structure. I have also discussed the need to triangulate insights from the linguistic, socio-cognitive and disciplinary points of view. It is possible to categorise steps in terms of text-internal and text-external factors, but it will still be difficult to avoid a certain degree of overlap. Strictly speaking only steps six is text-internal, all others are essentially text-external. However, judgements under other steps will necessarily involve text-internal as well as text-external factors. One of the most distinctive characteristics of the generic framework is that it does not consider textual factors operating independently but always embedded within a socio-cognitive and disciplinary context. Therefore it will unrealistic and perhaps undesirable to expect a valid and clear-cut distinction between the text-internal and text-external factors.

Moves and strategies

Johansen has raised the problem of distinguishing *moves* and *strategies.* It is an important tool for the analysis of certain aspects of genres and has not been sufficiently discussed and developed in existing literature. *Moves* are fairly well-established, but the status of *strategies* has so far been neglected. Although both of them have linguistic correlates, they are not necessarily the same. *Moves* are essentially rhetorical, whereas *strategies* are motivated by non-linguistic considerations. Swales (1990: 141) uses the term *step* instead of *strategy.* In his CARS model, for example, the move establishing a niche can be achieved by any of the four steps, either by *counter-claiming*, *indicating a gap*, *question-raising*, or *continuing a tradition*.

These four steps are strategies one could use to realise a move. The important thing is that one may use any of the strategies, the move will still be the same. The strategies, therefore are non-discriminatory, whereas moves can make a significant different in the status of genres. However, in Bhatia's analysis of promotional letters (1993: 48) the move *introducing the offer* is realised in three stages, i.e., *offering product/service*, *essential detailing of the offer*, and *indicating value of the*

offer. The status of these stages is different from that of strategies. There is no element of choice involved in this. The move, in this case, is realised in three stages, all of which are obligatory.

Engberg has raised two issues, a specific one about the relationship between levels of descriptions, and a more general one, about genre and language learning. Let me take up the first one first.

As mentioned in the introductory sections of this response, genre theory attempts to account for the intricacies of human behaviour. Although discourse forms are seen to have linguistic realisations, they are essentially socio-cognitive in nature, especially when they are associated with institutionalised settings. The relationship between linguistic form and the ultimate social meaning it acquires is interpreted not only through semantics, but pragmatics as well. Given the present-day developments in the field of discourse and communication, such a relationship is taken for granted. However, one may legitimately raise the question of the relationship between text-structures and cognition, where the notion of schematic structures is significant. Although schema theory has provided interesting answers to several questions raised in this context, they are essentially relevant to purely cognitive aspects of text-structures. There is also a strong link between schematic structures and individual variation in text construction and comprehension. In genre theory, however, the nature of discourse structure is essentially socio-cognitive (see Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995), where individual variation is underplayed and disciplinary community consensus is given foremost priority. The two approaches to text-structures are, in principle, somewhat different.

Genre and language learning

Engberg's more general concern about the thickening descriptions of specific genres and general language teaching is certainly a real one. In a way, he is right when he claims that in order to have a full mastery of the language, one will need to acquire all the genres, which may be beyond the effort of any language learner, whatever his or her motivation. However, there is a positive side to it. Firstly, it is neither necessary nor desirable to make an effort to acquire all the genres in use. It will be difficult for even the most accomplished native speakers of the language to boast of an equal competence in a large variety of genres. In most

specialised areas one is expected to have access to only a sub-set of the whole language. Secondly, even at the schools levels, language education based on genre descriptions can be very effective. There are significant indications of successful language education operations from Australia based on genre pedagogy (see Reid, 1987). As mentioned in the preceding sections, it is possible to identify and describe genres either specifically or at a general level, even in terms of primary forms of discourse (Bakhtin, 1986), e.g., description, narration, argumentation, persuasion etc. These are very general categories of generic description, which can be refined in various permutations and combinations to give shape to more specific generic constructs. Finally language teaching based on thicker descriptions of genres is likely to be more pedagogically effective than any other form of general language education, especially at advanced levels of instruction (LSP). After all, as Bazerman rightly point out, the first step to language mastery is the acquisition of institutionalised expression.

> "...the individual learns to express the self against the compulsive society... We are not ourselves because we set ourselves apart from each other. We become ourselves as we realize ourselves in relation to each other. The social is everything we do with each other and what we become as we do it. We individuate by identifying ourselves on a social landscape, a landscape come to know as we interact with it. We discover and create ourselves and others by what we do with each other" (Bazerman, 1993: viii).

Once that has been achieved, individual expression is not difficult to acquire.

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