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**Writer-reader interaction:
adopting a diachronic
perspective**

30th August 2007

GENRES WITHIN THE ACADEMY

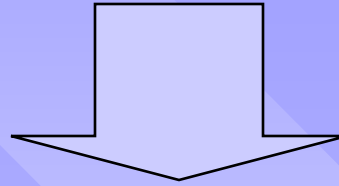
Different types of interaction
between genres and disciplines
(Bhatia, 2002):

- genres can be typically related to certain disciplines

GENRES WITHIN THE ACADEMY

- or they can apply to a range of disciplines (cf. textbooks, essays, research journals and research articles)

TEXTBOOKS



an instance of complex professional discourse involving the writer in, at least, two dimensions of social interaction:

SOCIAL INTERACTION



- one pedagogic dimension, constructed to engage with readers-consumers
- another dimension addressed to colleagues as evaluators (Hyland, 2000: 107)

ACADEMIC TEXTBOOKS

- provide the fundamental notions of a discipline
- introduce readers/ students to the complexity and tentativeness of knowledge (Hyland, 1999)

ACADEMIC TEXTBOOKS

- foreground the mechanism of the interaction between the writer and the readers/ students
- tend to be organised in such a way as to render their reading at an appropriate level for readers/ students

INTERACTIONS IN TEXTBOOKS

Readers/students have to be:

- introduced to the fundamental notions of the discipline
- guided through the text

- helped in their understanding of the writers' intended meaning

FOCUS ON METADISOURSE

“...an interesting, and relatively new, approach to conceptualizing interactions between text producers and users” (Hyland, 2005, xi).

- Interactive metadiscourse is meant to help the readers through the text
- Interactional metadiscourse is meant to involve readers and open opportunities for them to contribute to the discourse by alerting them to the author's perspective (Hyland, 2005: 52).

Why P.A. Samuelson's *Economics*?

- ❖ for more than half a century this book "[...] has served as the standard bearer for the teaching of introductory economics in classrooms in America and throughout the world". (Samuelson and Nordhaus - Preface to the 17th edition, 2001: xvii)

- ❖ remarkable longevity (17 editions)
- ❖ from the 12th edition onwards the book features a co-author

Why introductory chapters?

BECAUSE

- they are conventionally understood as stretches of discourse which serve the purpose of 'setting the scene' for what has to come (Bhatia, 1993: 79)

Why introductory chapters?

- they represent the first contact between the author and the readers and tend to devote more time and space than the other chapters to laying the foundations of the relationship between the two participants

1st EDITION vs. 11th EDITION

- 1st edition (1948 written by Samuelson alone)
- 11th edition (written in 1980 – the last written by Samuelson as a single author)

11th EDITION

- addition of graphs and illustrations to provide necessary data to complement the written text
- addition of new paragraphs dealing with new issues
- division of paragraphs into sub-paragraphs

12th EDITION (1985)

Samuelson and Nordhaus

- ❖ new sections added (on micro- and macroeconomics)
- ❖ more precise and accurate ('technical') terms
- ❖ provision of precise examples
- ❖ increased assertiveness

12th EDITION (1985)

Samuelson and Nordhaus

- ❖ from 'I' to receiver-exclusive and receiver-inclusive 'we'
- ❖ mitigation of criticism
- ❖ attempt to involve the reader more closely
- ❖ adoption of a more objective attitude (acknowledgement of disagreements on economic issues)

(cf. Klamer's statement: "the twelfth edition seems to break with the image of scientific harmony" (1990: 138))

- presence of fewer 'humanistic' strokes for the sake of comforting the reader/student

16th EDITION (1998) and 17th EDITION (2001)

- frequent use of receiver-inclusive 'we' + must/can
- frequent use of 'you' / 'you' + will
- frequent use of rhetorical questions

16th EDITION (1998) and 17th EDITION (2001)

- frequent use of questions to involve the readers/students
- frequent use of imperatives to involve the readers and direct their attention towards graphs, diagrams, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Constant attention towards the readers' needs

In the first edition/s:

- 'soft' approach
- humanistic features used to comfort students who may be afraid of 'hard'/scientific data

CONCLUSIONS

- avoidance of 'you' to directly address the reader

CONCLUSIONS

In the latest editions:

- frequent use of endophoric markers to direct readers to visual support (e.g. graphs, tables, etc.)

CONCLUSIONS

- increased use of rhetorical questions
- increased use of questions, asked to express the authors' point of view on a particular issue

CONCLUSIONS

- frequent use of imperatives (their high frequency suggests a certain rhetorical effort to display authority- cf. Hyland,2000: 126)

CONCLUSIONS

- frequent use of 'you', which contributes, together with questions and imperatives to creating a direct and explicit relationship between the writer and the reader