SAME GENRE, DIFFERENT DISCIPLINE: A GENRE-BASED STUDY OF BOOK REVIEWS IN ACADEME[*]

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Abstract

Genre analysts attempting to map down the repertoire of genres used in academe have fostered reading and writing pedagogies in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Although book reviews can potentially offer novice academic writers opportunity to get started in the academic debate, researchers have neglected the genre due to its unremarkable character as reference literature. With the objective of contributing to the definition of a key short genre which has received little attention from specialists, this paper presents the analysis of the information organisation of sixty academic book reviews in chemistry, economics, and linguistics. The analysis revealed that, although book reviews show regularities in information, content and form, some variation occurs in terms of how reviewers realise evaluation and description moves across disciplinary boundaries. Variation can be associated with these reviewers' tendency to respond to specifics in the epistemological organisation of their respective fields, regarding object of study, commonly adopted methodologies, and literary tradition. The results not only suggest existing connections between text and context, but also indicate that discursive practices in the disciplines have to be considered in EAP teaching in order to help

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[*] An earlier version of this study with partial results was presented at the 1995 TESOL Conference, Long Beach, CA (Motta-Roth, 1995a).

learners develop more critical and effective reading and writing competencies in accordance with their field of study.[1]

Key-words: *English for academic purposes;   rhetoric; genre analysis; book reviews.*

Resumo

Analistas de gênero, trabalhando no mapeamento do repertório de gêneros usados na academia, têm auxiliado no desenvolvimento de abordagens de ensino da leitura e redação em Inglês para Fins Acadêmicos (EAP). Embora a resenha acadêmica possa se constituir em uma oportunidade para que escritores inexperientes se iniciem no debate acadêmico, pesquisadores têm negligenciado esse gênero discursivo devido a sua pouca representatividade como literatura de referência. Com o objetivo de contribuir para a definição desse gênero tão importante, mas tão pouco estudado, este artigo apresenta a análise da organização da informação de 60 resenhas acadêmicas em economia, lingüística e química. A análise revelou que, embora resenhas acadêmicas demonstrem certas regularidades em termos de forma e conteúdo da informação, variações foram verificadas em termos de como resenhadores avaliam e descrevem em diferentes disciplinas. Essas variações parecem estar associadas à tendência de resenhadores em responder às especificidades da organização epistemológica de suas respectivas áreas de conhecimento em relação a objeto de estudo, metodologias comumente adotadas e tradição literária. Os resultados não apenas sugerem a existência de conecções entre texto e contexto, mas também

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indicam que as práticas discursivas nas disciplinas devem ser consideradas no ensino de EAP para que aprendizes possam desenvolver habilidades de leitura e redação mais críticas e eficazes de acordo com seus respectivos campos de estudo.[1]

Palavras-chave: *inglês para fins acadêmicos; retórica; análise de gênero; resenhas.*

1.   Introduction

With the increasing speed of recent advances in all areas of knowledge production and with the use of English as the *lingua franca* of the international scientific community, publications in academic journals in English have become very important. In such an almost exclusive English-speaking academic environment, nonnative scholars interested in publishing in international spheres are faced with the problem of developing adequate academic competencies in English. In response to this need and in an attempt to inform teaching practices, Genre Analysts working with English for Academic Purposes (EAP) have focused their attention on academic written genres (see, for example, Swales (1990; 1981) and Bazerman (1988) on research articles; Salager-Meyer (1990), Bittencourt (1995) and Motta-Roth & Hendges (in press) on abstracts; Berkenkotter & Huckin (1995) on written communication in the disciplines). Nevertheless, the book review as a highly common short genre has been almost entirely ignored by this research community and this dismissal accounts for an important gap in our knowledge of the academic genre system for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the study of evaluative language in book reviews may reveal differences in values and traditions across

fields (see, for example, Becher 1981, 1987), which can be in itself a relevant tool in EAP reading and writing. Researchers have been increasingly aware that knowledge about practices in specific fields can help learners develop a more appropriate and contextualized understanding of how academic genres function (Haas, 1994).

Furthermore, book reviews raise an apparent paradox. The genre is generally recognized as unremarkable because it is rarely cited as reference in articles or books (Wiley, 1993). But exactly because of this 'unremarkable' character — book reviews can be written by a wider range of academic staff who would not be in a position to write longer, and often more laborious texts, such as the research article for refereed journals. While book reviews can act as an initiation in publishing for junior scholars[2], the genre can also offer opportunities to academics in off-center places who are nonnative (and often inexperienced) writers to take part in and make their contribution to the mainstream of academe. These researchers can — at least potentially — contribute to book review sections in international journals, criticizing and/or praising other authors' texts, and thus helping to shape their

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[2] In an attempt to answer my anonymous reviewer's question as for the validity of this statement, I could say perhaps cite an academic journal editor's words (more specifically, J. P. of the *Journal of Economic Literature*, who I interviewed along with two other editors, one in linguistics and one in chemistry, as part of my Ph. D. dissertation research (Motta-Roth, 1995b)): "Usually both senior and junior scholars are asked to review books. It is probably easier to get a junior person than a senior person. ...usually people refuse to write book reviews because they don't count very much for tenure... Junior scholars see this as an opportunity to get their name in print. A senior person has often been in print a lot and the novelty of that is worn off. Senior persons have often got more administrative duties, too, and therefore less time, but we are able to get senior people, too. Generally the junior person has not done this before or has done infrequently and likes the idea of trying his hand on it. " (economics editor in Motta-Roth, 1995b:77)

These editors seem to think that, for experienced and very active scholars who are interested in the projection that a longer publication can bring, BRs hold an 'unremarkable' character and thus are not important for enlarging a curriculum vitae or for getting career promotion (for further comments on the 'unremarkable' character of BRs, see Wiley, 1993).

discipline through critical analysis of the knowledge that is being presented in book-form.

Finally, research about how book reviews in English operate can contribute to the development of more effective reading skills of EAP learners. Awareness of the generic textual structure can help the advanced reader use book reviews more critically and effectively as resources in their attempts to select material from the overload of readings in university courses.

Therefore, in this paper, I will present the results of a genre-analytical study of academic book reviews (BR) in English from three disciplines — linguistics, chemistry, and economics. The underlying hypotheses are: 1) texts belonging to the same genre will present specific features that relate to a general rhetorical representation that reviewers have of the genre; and 2) exemplars of the same genre, which originated in different disciplines, will vary, to some extent, from this general rhetorical representation. This variation is expected to throw some light over the body of knowledge of the field.

The main issue in question here is: to what extent can text vary in relation to context and still be regarded as exemplars of the same genre? In other words, how do reviewers vary in relation to the kind of information that characterize a BR in opposition, for example, to a research article? In that respect, the choice of three disciplines stems from the need for parameters when discussing how BRs reflect the fields to which they belong. The consideration of three disciplines dismisses the pure opposition between extremes, since, by comparison, results obtained in the analysis of specific textual features in a third discipline may

help clarify the role of the same features in BRs in the other two fields.

Linguistics was chosen because of the obvious interest of the author in her area of study. The other two fields, chemistry and economics, were chosen for what could be called epistemological reasons. Chemistry is usually classified as a hard science and economics, as a social science, consequently this classification seems to place them sufficiently apart from linguistics, in the humanities, for their texts to provide evidence of contrastive disciplinary cultures. Two disciplines which are usually placed in the same area of academe as, for example, sociology and anthropology, in the social sciences, can be expected to present greater similarities concerning body of knowledge, object of study, and values, than two disciplines that are placed in two different fields. Therefore, assuming that there is a basic rhetorical organization of the genre that any exemplar of BRs will have, the hypothesis is that variations from this basic description can be credited to the differences in the epistemic organization of academic disciplines.

2.   Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the information organization of BRs in terms of a genre whose exemplars share a basic rhetorical organization. I argue in favor of considering linguistics, economics, and chemistry as three discourse communities, heterogeneous sociorhetorical groups whose elements share occupational goals and interests. In interviews with BR editors of established journals in the three fields (Motta-Roth, 1995b), linguists, economists, and chemists were depicted as members of a community who are

organized around common goals (e.g., research programs, research grants, publications) and share familiarity with the particular genres and lexicon used in attaining these goals (research papers, abstracts, technical terms, accorded concepts, etc.). Like discourse communities, these disciplines use mechanisms for communication between their members, with the objective of providing information and comments within the constant flux of membership amongst specialists and beginners (publications, congress presentations, etc.).

In addition, Swales' (1990:46) definition of genre seems to apply here firstly because BRs, analogous to a genre, involve a set of relationships between people that are acting in a given social context (a scientific journal) and performing certain social roles. These roles are commonly associated with that occasion and with certain goals, i.e., in the case of BRs, to introduce and evaluate new publications in the field.

Secondly, these communicative events are recognized by the expert members of the discourse community. Expert reviewers and readers recognize exemplars of the genre using 'schemata', i.e., the previous knowledge that guides their expectations about texts (cf. Carrel and Eisterhold, 1983; Rumelhart, 1984). They approach BRs using previous knowledge of academe in general and of disciplinary culture[3] in particular (content schemata), and previous knowledge about generic textual features of BRs (formal schemata). Moreover, appropriate reading and writing skills enable these expert members to bring to the text adequate expectations about the potential content and form. Ultimately, the communicative purposes of introducing and evaluating new

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[3] I will use the term 'disciplinary' to refer to 'the common possession of the practitioners of a particular [academic] discipline' (Kuhn, 1970[1962]:182).

publications constitute the rationale that constrains the rhetoric of the genre. Thus readers seek description and evaluation of recent publications in the field and reviewers tend to produce texts that respond to these expectations. Consequently, instances of BRs will present similar patterns in structure, style, content and intended audience that define the genre.

In analyzing the texts in the corpus, I will try to define a schematic description of the moves and their respective smaller units that are usually found in concrete examples of BRs. This schematic description consists of generalizations made about how information is organized in a group of related categories, cases, or events. These categories may differ in regard to the specific instances in which they are realized (Rumelhart, 1980; Nwogu, 1990) and thus, point towards propensities in the genre, not to absolute accountability of rhetorical moves (Swales, 1994, personal communication).

3.   Methods

Studies in Text Analysis usually emphasize 'the tactical aspects of genre construction' (Bhatia, 1993:19) through the progression of information in 'moves' that convey the writer's intended meanings with the objective of influencing the reader's decisions (in this case, the reader's evaluation of the book). A move is defined here as a stretch of discourse (extending for one or more sentences) that realizes a specific communicative function and that represents a stage in the development of an overall structure of information that is commonly associated with the genre. In a BR, an introductory move of 'Describing the book' can represent a

stage in the development of an overall structure of information geared to the description and evaluation of the book which is commonly associated with the genre.

A move is identified in terms of the function it plays in the genre, 'the part which uttering [or writing] these words plays in the language-game (...) the function utterances have in the technique of using language' (Wittgenstein, [1953]1958:10, §21). Each move can be defined as 'a unit of discourse structure which presents a uniform orientation, has specific structural characteristics, and has clearly defined functions' (Nwogu, 1990:127). Each move, in turn, includes a number of lower-level constituent elements or sub-functions (Motta-Roth, 1995b) that combine to form the information which makes up a move.

In this paper, the resulting pattern of moves and sub-functions constitutes the information structure that can define an exemplar of BRs. For example, a move of 'Describing the book' can advance the reviewer's intention to describe the book to the reader. Smaller parts of this move that alone or together can advance the text in the direction established by the move could include 'Stating the theme of each chapter' or 'Citing visual material (e.g., tables, figures)'.

In each move, certain linguistic expressions are frequently used as 'unanalyzed chunks of language used in certain predictable contexts' that function as discourse devices (Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992); these linguistic expressions function as 'metadiscourse markers' (Vande Kopple, 1985), that is, they are present in the text to involve author and reader 'in rhetorical acts of comprehension and persuasion' (Crismore, 1989:4). Since metadiscourse can encompass both the Hallidayan textual and interpersonal functions of language (:4), it can be said that metadiscourse markers signal the

textual and rhetorical functions of a given passage in the text: they indicate the cohesion of the texture of information and also make evident (or sometimes disguise) the author's attitude.

Thus, in BRs, the reviewer can start the text by, for example, introducing the book, using a cataphoric nominal phrase such as *This volume/book/monograph*, plus a verb in the present tense (usually the verb *to be*) and a complement:

[C#1]*This book* is very good.

Or the title of the book in italics to call the reader's attention:

[L#2]*Essays on the English Language and Applied Linguistics* (EAAL) is a festschrift celebrating Gerard Nickel's 60th Birthday.

By employing this construction, the reviewer realizes the textual function of indicating to the reader the 'opening' of the text.

The definition of the rhetorical structure of the genre BR was done based on 60 texts, devided evenly among the three disciplines, extracted from 20 of the most cited journals published in English (Garfield, 1991; 1989a; 1989b; 1989c), and published in 1990. These texts were compared in terms of their information content and of these metadiscoursive devices, and then each BR was coded for moves.

4.   Results and discussion

Four rhetorical moves with their correspondent sub-functions were commonly found across disciplines in the corpus as seen in Figure 1. These four moves are very often visually signaled by paragraph shifts so that boundaries between them co-occur with paragraph boundaries. The opening paragraph usually encompasses the 'Introducing the book' move. Here the reviewer provides background information on the book, stating its basic characteristics, e.g., if it is a collection of texts by different authors or if it is a text by one author, if it is a book on a variety of topics within a broader area of interest or if it is focused on a single topic. This introductory paragraph basically provides five pieces of information about the book: central topic and format, readership, author, topic generalizations and insertion of the book in the broader field of study to which it relates.

Besides defining the topic of the book (Sub-function 1), the first sentence usually informs about the potential readership (Sub-function 2):

> [L#7] *Academic Writing: Techniques and Tasks* by Ilona Leki is a writing textbook for the advanced ESL student who is collegebound.

Allowing for certain variation in order of the sub-functions in BRs, the first sentence can also inform about the author's previous experience (Sub-function 3):

> [E#1] First, disclosure. Greg Davidson once worked under my supervision. Both he and Paul Davidson are friends. An endorsement from my father graces the jacket of this book. And there is much between the covers with which I agree.

Move 1	**INTRODUCING THE BOOK**
Sub-function 1	Defining the general topic of the book
	and/or
Sub-function 2	Informing about potential readership
	and/or
Sub-function 3	Informing about the author
	and/or
Sub-function 4	Making topic generalizations
	and/or
Sub-function 5	Inserting book in the field
Move 2	**OUTLINING THE BOOK**
Sub-function 6	Providing general view of the organization of the book
	and/or
Sub-function 7	Stating the topic of each chapter
	and/or
Sub-function 8	Citing extra-text material
Move 3	**HIGHLIGHTING PARTS OF THE BOOK**
Sub-function 9	Providing focused evaluation
Move 4	**PROVIDING CLOSING EVALUATION OF THE BOOK**
Sub-function 10A	Definitely recommending/ disqualifying the book
	or
Sub-function 10B	Recommending the book despite indicated shortcomings

Figure 1: Schematic description of rhetorical moves in book reviews
(Motta-Roth, 1995b)

Finally, in Move 1, the reviewer can relate the new material to the body of disciplinary knowledge, either by making topic generalizations (Sub-function 4):

> [L#19] The existence of a connection between phonological awareness and reading has been confirmed in more recent research and our knowledge about this link has been extended. We know now that the connection is a specific one: children's phonological skills predict their success in reading, but not in other educational skills, such as mathematics (Bradley and Bryant, 1983, 1985). We also know that the original distinction made by the Haskins group between awareness of syllables and awareness of phonemes does not tell the whole story.

or by inserting the book in the field (Sub-function 5):

> [C#5] More than 10 years has passed since the publication of the first papers on flow injection analysis (FIA) and the technique has now been clearly shown to have many widespread applications in analytical chemistry.

The next move, 'Outlining the book', is usually the longest one, appearing in the following few paragraphs. It includes a detailed description of how the book is organized, i.e., in parts, chapters, sections, etc., which topics are treated in each chapter, with what approach, and what kind of additional information such as graphs, pictures, and tables, is included in the book. Sub-function 6 provides a general account of the order in which topics/parts/chapters are organized in the book through the use of metadiscourse markers that refer to the parts into which the book as a whole

has been divided (e.g., *the author(s) divide(s) the book, the book is divided into X parts*). Sub-function 7 zooms into each chapter, bringing increasing amount of details with metadiscourse markers such as *the introductory chapter illustrates X; chapter 2 presents a historic overview of Y.* When both sub-functions are present, they usually go from general to specific:

> [L#1] (Sub-function 5) Following an introduction by the authors, *the book is divided into three parts*. (Sub-function 6) *Part 1*, Theoretical Backgrounds, includes two articles whose purpose is to provide the theoretical framework for .... *Part 2*, Models: Exposition and Argument, presents studies that illustrate the application of theory to practice...*The final section, Part 3*, Inter-language Studies, represents language-specific concerns and includes ...

> [E#3] (Sub-function 5) *There are twelve case studies as well as an introductory essay* by Barber... (Sub-function 6) *The first two case studies focus on* the South...*The next four studies deal with* economics in schools that were to become part of the Ivy League...*There are two additional studies by*...

Most chemistry reviewers in the corpus include Move 2 with some preference for adopting the overall perspective conveyed by Sub-function 6 (80%). When Sub-function 6 is present in chemistry BRs, it is generally limited to a synthetic listing of chapters title and topic (plus author in edited books), indicating that giving the reader a general idea of the organization and number of chapters of the book is more important than providing a more detailed description of specific chapters. Conversely, in linguistics and economics,

the longer detailed accounts of Sub-function 7 are absolutely more frequent (respectively, 100% and 90%) than general overviews (70% and 50%). This tendency may bear some relation to text length.

In the corpus of 60 BRs, the average length was 932 words but, in general, chemistry BRs were found to be much shorter (average of 592 words) than those in economics (1,089) and linguistics (1,115)[4]. Since detailed description and evaluation of the book (Sub-function 7) is less frequently found in the chemistry corpus, indicating that it is more important to give the reader a general idea of the organization and number of chapters of the book than to provide a more detailed and evaluative discussion of specific chapters. This results in more objective, generally descriptive texts in chemistry, instead of more evaluative and detailed ones, which are likely to demand lengthier argumentation.

Move 2 also has the function of citing material such as tables, appendices, references, and graphs that are not part of the main text of the book, thus the name of Sub-function 8, 'Citing extra-text material'. Metadiscourse markers are used to emphasize the additional or outside character of such sections such as *a bibliography is provided at the end, appendices give more detail about X, additional information is provided in the appendix.*

> [C#1] (Sub-function 8) *Bibliographies, at the end of each chapter*, are extensive and are divided by subtopics from the chapter, a helpful touch. *The book ends with thorough author and subject indices, a*

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[4] These figures show a superficial variation as this corpus is amplified to 180 texts in a broader study (Motta-Roth, 1995b), but the proportion is maintained.

glossary, and an appendix of names and abbreviations.

Although the results for Sub-function 8 in linguistics and chemistry are the same, an analysis of the frequency of reference to extra-textual material in evaluations of the book, provided in Moves 3 and 4, shows that it is an important part of chemistry books.

In 9 of the 20 BRs in chemistry, there is some reference to extra-text material either in Move 3 (which provides focused evaluation) or Move 4 (final evaluation), and in one text, reference to extra-text material appears in both kinds of evaluation. These numbers assume greater significance if we consider that both in economics and linguistics no BR makes reference to items such as graphs, tables, appendices, etc., outside Move 2, where Sub-function 8 normally appears. Therefore, this type of material does not embody a value to be used in evaluating strong or weak points in the book (Move 3) or in recommending it (Move 4). Whereas, for chemists, the greater significance of extra-text material can be credited to the very nature of the disciplinary object of study which, at the most basic level, involves periodical tables, graphs, etc. More importantly, however, is the fact that, due to the fast pace with which scientific advances occur in chemistry, speed in information exchange assumes great significance[5]. Thus, appendices with references, author, subject and data indices make information readily available through visual devices and so are highly valued and can influence the reviewer's evaluation of the book.

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[5] Peter Smith (one of the interviewees, editor of the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, the main reviewing journal in chemistry nowadays in the US), personal communication, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, November, 1993.

Additional evidence of this clear preference that chemists have for a general and readily available information on the book is the tendency to include information about extra-text material in the first paragraph of their texts (30%) in comparison with linguistics (10%) and economics (none). Since these additional sections are not necessarily present in all books, this is an optional sub-function with a frequency of 38.33%. It is also recursive because reference to graphs, tables, indices, or bibliography can reappear at any point in the BR whenever the chapter being discussed has these extra-text materials.

While Move 2 has a descriptive quality to it, the following Move 3 is clearly evaluative. The second longest move, 'Highlighting parts of the book', conveys focused evaluation, i.e., the critique of the book properly said. Here the reviewer concentrates on specific features giving a positive or negative comment with varying degrees of hedging, from definitive to very mild criticism or praise.

As the most basic characteristic feature of BRs, evaluation appears even in very short exemplars with no other rhetorical moves. Evaluation is seen here in terms of "terms of praise and blame" (Aristotle, Book 1, 1991:48), i.e., particular linguistic devices used to demonstrate the merit of a given person or thing. In book reviewing, evaluation is built in terms of the characteristic ways of arguing in the discipline for the acceptance of new published material. Thus terms of praise and blame are used taking into account what is considered to be desirable or undesirable, important or unimportant in the intellectual apparatus of the field.

Due to the evaluative character of the genre, terms of praise and blame can be found at any point along the text. As already pointed out by discourse analysts (as, for example,

Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Hoey, 1983), evaluation is usually interspersed throughout texts and may escape strict classification as a situated discursive act. However, I have detected in Move 3 a break from Move 2, where reviewers shift the text focus from describing the organization of the book to evaluating aspects of the book as specially positive or negative. Therefore, Move 3 differs from the general descriptive function of Move 2 and from the diffuse evaluative character conveyed by terms of praise and blame dispersed throughout the text. This third move appears independently as a stretch of discourse where reviewers choose specific parts of the book to highlight, becoming specially subjective in their comments. Here, metadiscourse markers (underlined in the example below) signaling a shift in focus to evaluation (in bold) are used:

[C#10] (Sub-function 9) *Some parts of the book are confusing*, probably because of the author's brevity. **At the end of Chapter 8, Surjan shows that the use of incomplete basis sets leads to some mathematical inconsistencies. However, the reader is told nothing about their practical consequences, or how to get around them in actual calculations.**

[L#19] (Sub-function 9) *The book has many good points.* **It is the most comprehensive statement to date of the Haskins group's position, and it is clearly and enthusiastically written. Each chapter scrupulously explores the practical as well as the theoretical implications of the research that it deals with. There is also a great deal that will be new to many readers.**

[E#6] (Sub-function 9) *Turning to the shortcomings*, **I think that, while the book provides us with a very good analysis of the equilibrium..., it does not cover many other areas in GE theory... The book would have been more useful as a text if it discussed (or at least referred to) more related works... and I think the book would have a wider readership if chapter 8 were expanded even at the cost of shortening other chapters.**

As the discussion above shows, this move is concerned with highlighting the best and the worst in the book, giving a summarized account of what caught the reviewers attention, the criteria followed for the evaluation, the reasons for that, and examples from the book to sustain this evaluation.

Since evaluation is the defining feature of the genre, it would be fair to expect an incidence of 100% and, in fact, Move 3 was present in 55 of the 60 BRs (91.67%). The lack of this typical element in 5 of the BRs may be explained by the fact that the closing Move 4 also provides evaluation and is present in every text where Move 3 is missing. Therefore, all BRs have at least one kind of evaluation, realised either by Move 3 or Move 4 (or, even most frequently, by both.)

BRs in economics are specially evaluative since this focused evaluation is present in 100% of the texts, while in linguistics, this frequency is 90% and in chemistry, 85%. Economics can also be considered the most evaluative among the three areas because its reviewers dedicate larger portions of texts to evaluation than in the other two disciplines. In chemistry, this move is shorter and involves fewer subjective comments and less background information about the literature in the field than those in the other two fields.

Compare differences in length in the examples of Move 3 across fields, noting the break from Move 2 through the use of expressions that imply subjectivity (*I found; Ironically*) or call the reader's attention to the flaws in the book, e.g., *the greatest weakness of the book lies in X.*

> [C#6] (Sub-function 9) For someone relatively unfamiliar with silicone polymers, *I found it difficult to determine which compounds and results were important.* ... Although potential uses are mentioned frequently, **it was unclear** whether the class of materials under discussion had actually found industrial application. Each area is considered in relative isolation, often making it **difficult to elucidate trends** of reactivity. Frequently the research which was summarized seemed to lack a sense of purpose.

> [L#6] (Sub-function 9) *Ironically, however, it is Tollefson's attempt to counter charges of subjectivity that forms one of the weaknesses of the book*: In his effort to provide irrefutable evidence for his claims, **he presents so much documentation that it sometimes proves cumbersome,** interfering with the clarity of the argument. **His logic is also occasionally difficult to follow, for example,** ... **Finally, in some instances, Tollefson does not distinguish clearly enough between**..., **an oversight that may result in misunderstanding...**

Usually in Move 3, reviewers emphasize what is a value in the discipline and how or if the book corresponds to it. In chemistry, a crucial factor is recency in publication.

Most BRs bring some kind of allusion to time and the book is evaluated in terms of how well it was able to cope with the fast pace of the discipline advances, stressing the book's recency:

> [C#2] (Sub-function 9) Although these chapters aim to be molecular than earlier chapters, they are rather cursory and do not discuss *recent developments*...most developments cited are *more than about 20 years old*, and *more recent work*...is not discussed...there is no discussion of the considerable body of *modern theory*...

> [C#9] (Sub-function 9) The material, based on *more than 300 references through 1987 with two or three from 1988*, is presented in a clear and logical sequence.

For economics, models are of great significance for the predictive character of the discipline in relation, for example, to how the financial market will behave:

> [E#4] (Sub-function 9) Taylor develops a neat formal *model* of choice among consumption activities involving primary and slave processes which are hedonic opposites.

> [E#10] (Sub-function 9) On the whole, the basic ideas and *models* are presented in enough detail to make the book substantially self-contained in the way that a text-book needs to be, while at the same time providing a fairly rapid tour through, and guide to, an extensive literature, appropriate to a reference book.

In linguistics, the reviewer frequently comments on the appeal the book has for the reader, either criticizing or praising the author for the attention given to the potential readership. A great number of references to the potential readership may be due to what reviewers understand to be a high level of competition for readership in the linguistic discourse community. According to Fredrickson and Swales (1994:4):

> *the greater the competition in a territory (as measurable by number of research papers per topic area, conference/journal acceptance rate, promotion criteria, percentage of funded proposals, etc.) the greater the rhetorical effort authors will have to expend in order to create research spaces for themselves.'*

This idea originally relates to writers of research articles but can also be extended to the case of book writers in linguistics. As an applied area, linguistics seems more prone to book writing, as reaffirmed by its significantly greater tradition in book reviewing than in other areas. As many as 70% of the top twenty linguistics journals (Garfield, 1991; 1989a; 1989b; 1989c) carry a BR section, as compared to only 35% in chemistry and 40% in economics. This greater tendency in producing knowledge in book-form would create greater competition for readers and therefore would constitute criterion by which to evaluate books, i.e., if the author has defined and attended to the needs of his/her readership as seen below:

> [L#9] (Sub-function 9) The volume concludes with a brief history of linguistics as told from a translinguistic point of view. The *reader* should be advised to consult

instead the primary sources or even the secondary sources cited by Doe.

[L#11] (Sub-function 9) A problem with the essays derives from the fact that they address a broad range of *readers*, including those who are likely to disagree on fundamentals and those (like myself) who share the same psycholinguistic world view... A *reader* skeptical about whether models of generative grammar have any utility in modeling the language processor might have been won over more willingly if Felix had made more use of results from this recent work.

Considering the length of the evaluative move across disciplines, linguistics and economics reviewers usually develop a longer argumentation for negative evaluation. Specially in linguistics, reviewers often exemplify for the reader the point made and suggest changes, projecting an image of an expert in the disciplinary community addressing non-expert readers.

[L#8] (Sub-function 9) Differentiation has often been taken to be the central function, but some systems are remarkably poor in this regard, *for example*, the Highland Scots share very few surnames and employ a small set of Biblical names.

In chemistry, on the other hand, the reviewer limits him/herself to pointing out the flaws, without long critical comments, assuming that the facts speak for themselves and that possible solutions can be figured out by the reader.

As we arrive at the last paragraph of a BR, we usually find the closing move, 'Providing final evaluation', which is

explicitly signaled by a metadiscourse marker such as 'In sum'. At this point, the reviewer signals to the reader that the text is reaching its end, and clearly states his or her point of view in a definitive appraisal of the book, i.e., whether the book is worth reading or not.

Move 4 provides a final evaluation of the whole book and, in addition to functioning as a recommendation for the reader, serves the purpose of closing the text. Move 4 rounds up the text, breaking up with the detailed perspective adopted in Move 3. Metadiscourse markers found here convey an idea of totality and termination: *altogether, in summary/ conclusion, finally*. They also convey a type of evaluation — *an important contribution, a stimulating/an excellent book* — that takes into account what has been formerly said along the BR: *thus, despite, in spite of*. It can be totally recommendatory or disapproving (Sub-function 10A), or a combination of the two (Sub-function 10B), accommodating the criticism provided in the body of the text with a final positive evaluation (or vice-versa):

> [L#17] (Sub-function 10A) *In conclusion*, this handbook is definitely a good reference book to be used in addition to another textbook in an introductory business language course.

> [C#6] (Sub-function 10B) *In summary* the book is a collection of results obtained over a 15-year period. While some of the results are interesting and potentially important, no attempt is made to place them in context.

Also, reviewers very often make a final recommendation with a necessary quality to it by using the modal 'should':

> [C#4] (Sub-function 10B) ...it *should* be of interest to those in other disciplines who desire only an overview of the several chromatographic techniques.

> [L#6] (Sub-function 10B) ...It *should* be required reading for all ESL educators.

> [E#8] (Sub-function 10B) ...it is an excellent book and *should* be widely read. It considerably sharpens the debate over free market versus governmental monetary institutions. Paired with one of the free banking books it criticizes, it will greatly enliven courses in monetary economics.

Therefore, a BR combines descriptive and evaluative components in the form of moves. At the same time that a basic organization across fields can be observed, variations in how disciplinary communities evaluate and describe books were detected.

5.   Conclusion

Differences in BRs in the areas studied here suggest that disciplinary contexts have diverse modes of proposing knowledge. The results of this study indicate that chemistry reviewers show preference for shorter, descriptive, objective texts, which are less evaluative than the ones in economics and linguistics. Reviewers in economics tend to emphasize models and mathematics when commenting the good points in

a book, probably as a way to assure that the discipline will be regarded as "real" science[6]. In chemistry, recency in publication is a decisive criterion for quality. Correspondingly, the role played by the readership constitutes a criterion used by linguists to praise new publications.

Analyzing the 60 texts, crucial values such as mathematics and models, recency, and readership consistently surfaced in specific disciplines, indicating that book reviewing, as an academic activity, takes into account specific disciplinary consensual ideals (Kuhn, [1962]1970). These ideals impose corresponding demands on reviewers in terms of which values to introduce in producing justificatory arguments for recommending new books. Around this dynamic socialization between author, book, reader, reviewer, and other discipline members (e.g. editors), reviewing journals as professional forums offer opportunities for debate. The schematic description presented here in association with the metadiscourse markers commonly used to realize each move can give learners a clear picture of how information is commonly organized in BRs in refereed journals in English. However, besides awareness of information structure, writers and readers should know what type of information is relevant in their respective academic areas so that they may account for variations in the genre.

In the present analysis, I explored connections between text features and the cultural environment in the disciplines. I attempted to show that different epistemic

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[6] In discussing the rhetoric of the human sciences, Rorty (1991:21) argues that there is a tendency, within and outside academe, to think that to be scientific is a matter of being methodical (to follow procedures defined in advance). Thus 'methodical', 'scientific', 'rational', and 'objective' are commonly used as synonyms.

organizations in chemistry, linguistics and economics can produce different configurations of text features. The study of BRs associated with their context of production is relevant in that it provides EAP writing and reading instruction with more accurate information on how academic genres perform a function in specific disciplinary matrices. Still a more detailed treatment of issues touched upon in this paper, such as metadiscourse in academic texts and how they may vary in evaluative discourse is much needed.

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