

# **Academic Literacies and Genres**

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SIGET Panel  
**Generos textuais e letramento**  
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- Genre?

Limits of Term?

Umbrella Term/ subsumed under other categories?

- Literacy Practices?
  - Alternative to Genre?
  - Academic Literacy Practices
- Ethnographies of Academic Literacy Practices
  - 3 Models
- Applications/ Policy

# **“Genre” in Approaches to Academic Writing**

SIGET IV (Paper by Russell et al)

**Australia:** Features of Text (Martin; SFL)

**USA:** Discourse Community (Swales)

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory;  
Writing in the Disciplines; Rhetoric  
(Russell; Prior; Bazerman)

**UK:** Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough;  
Ivanic); Academic Literacies (Street;  
Ivanic; Lillis)

**France:** Didactics (Donahue)

# **Genre in Approaches to Academic and Professional Writing**

**SIGET V** (theory; data)

- ‘Communication’, SocioDidactics: Geneva School – Schneuwly; eg Pluri Lingual Programmes (Dolz) eg Infant oral genres (Cordelio)
- ‘Typified rhetorical social actions’; eg references to genre in media (Miller)
- ‘Activity systems’; eg environmental debate (Bazerman)
- ‘Social discursive interaction’; eg hotel leaflet (Coutinho) eg teacher genres

# Genre in Approaches to Academic and Professional Writing

## SIGET V (cont)

‘Discourse genres’ eg in classroom  
(Furlanetto)

‘Professional practices’ eg international  
arbitration (Bhatia)

‘Social action, activity’ eg Engineering/  
Writing Courses (Russell)

Multidimensional communicative approach  
to text linguistics eg readers’ letters  
(Ciapuscio)

# Genre in Approaches to Academic and Professional Writing

## SIGET V (cont)

Dialogue and Reflexivity eg student diaries  
(Castro)

Social Discursive Perspective eg text genres  
in L2 learning (Cristovao)

Rhetorical Moves in Texts, formulaic?  
(Adail)

Genres as dynamic, cultural formations eg  
manuals on genre for schools (Discussion)

# Genre in Approaches to Academic and Professional Writing

## SIGET V (cont)

- Prior Genre Knowledge eg research on student accounts of PK (Devitt)
- Didactic sequences, blocks of oration eg 11-13 students writing (Guimaraes)
- Writing Culture and Citizenship eg discussion groups with trainee teachers (Pinzon)

# Range of Genre Theory?

- Genre as 'synthesis', linking other approaches to text and action?
- Genre as medium or as content?
- Genre as text (subsuming action/ practices)?
- Genre as umbrella term?
- Genre as sub set of other categories?

Eg Literacy and Practice as umbrella terms subsuming genre?



# **NEW APPROACHES TO LITERACY**

## **(subsuming genre?)**

- New Literacy Studies (NLS):
- 'New' = not 'new literacies' but 'new studies'
- autonomous / ideological models
- Social practice approaches
- literacy events/literacy practices
- Ethnographic Perspective
- Multimodality
- "The Limits of the Local" / "What's New in NLS?"
- Relation to Genre? eg complementary or contrast re 'texts and practices'?

# NLS and Academic Literacy

- Ethnographic perspective
- 3 models
  - Study skills
  - Academic socialisation
  - Academic Literacies
- Applications to Practice/ Policy

## **a. STUDY SKILLS:**

- ***assumptions:*** student writing as technical skill and instrumental 'atomised skills; surface language, grammar, spelling; pathology;
- ***critique:*** autonomous model; reductionist
- ***courses:*** College Composition; Remedial classes
- ***aims:*** fix it'; remediate; 'basics'
- ***sources:*** behavioural psychology; training

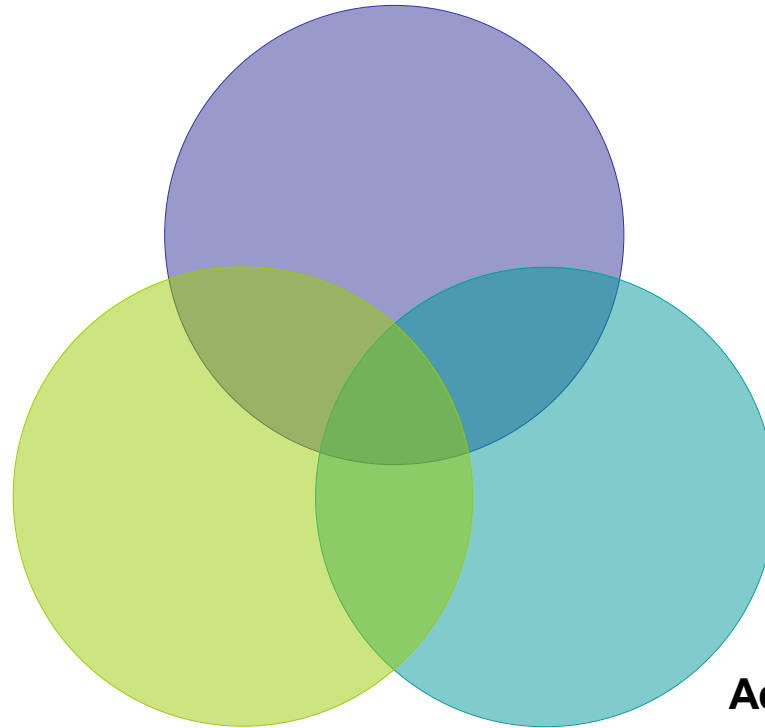
## **b. ACADEMIC SOCIALISATION:**

- ***assumptions:*** student writing as transparent medium of representation; focus on student orientation to learning and interpretation of learning task e.g. 'deep' and 'surface' learning
- ***critique;*** assumes one 'culture', doesn't focus on institutional practices, change or power; misses rhetorical features of writing
- ***courses:*** Writing Support; Study Skills
- ***aims:*** inculcating students into new 'culture';
- ***sources:*** social psychology; anthropology; constructivism

## **c. ACADEMIC LITERACIES:**

- ***assumptions:*** literacies as social practices; at level of epistemology and identities; institutions as sites of / constituted in discourses and power; ALL students need to learn these features, not just EAL issue
- **variety of communicative repertoire** e.g. genres, fields, disciplines; writing as rhetorical activity embedded in different disciplines/ discourse communities; student writing as constitutive and contested
- ***courses:*** writing taught within disciplines as well as generic courses on language/ writing awareness.
- ***aims:*** facilitate reflexivity/ language awareness eg re switching in linguistic practices, social meanings and identities, disciplinary comparisons
- ***sources:*** 'New Literacy Studies'; Critical Discourse Analysis; Systemic Linguistics; Cultural Anthropology; History of Education

**Academic literacies**



**Study skills**

**Academic socialisation**

# Applications/ Policy

- Support to tutors not just to students
- Beyond study skills and academic socialisation
- Practices not just Texts
- Discipline-based vs 'clinic'/ centre
- Tutors as ethnographers
- Normative/ transformative

# **Applications of NLS to Academic Literacies Programmes**

- Thinking Writing (Queen Mary, London)
- Widening Participation(King's College, Lond)
- 'Hidden' Literacies (Upenn)
- ESRC EAL/ academic literacies
- Letter (International adult literacy)



# **The Widening Participation Programme at King's College London**

- Government policy on 'widening participation'
- Course for 'Non-traditional' students from last year of school
- Course Content;
  - English for Academic Purposes;
  - academic literacies;
  - orienting to HE;
  - argument;
  - ICT

# GENRE/ MODE SWITCHING

## (In King's WP Programme)

- THOUGHTS/ IDEAS free flowing; not sentences
- 
- TALK/ DISCUSSION some explicitness; interlocutor
- Speech patterns
- 
- NOTES some structure, headings, lay out
- 
- OVERHEAD Key terms, single words;
- Lay out, semiosis
- WRITTEN TEXT joined up sentences;
- coherence/Cohesion;
- if academic then formal conventions

## QUESTION: How do genres/ modes vary across disciplines/ subjects/ fields?

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- **GENRE:** type of text eg formal/ informal eg notes/ letters/ academic essay
- **MODE:** 'a regularised organised set of resources for meaning-making'
- Eg image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech, writing
- **DISCIPLINE:** field of study, academic subject
- Eg geography, chemistry; Business Studies; Area Studies

# ‘Hidden’ Features of Academic Paper Writing (UPenn)

- **Framing**
  - *Genre* eg assignment essay, project report, dissertation
  - *Audience* eg class tutor; examiner; researcher in discipline
- **‘Contribution’/ ‘So what?’**
  - *To knowledge*
  - *To field*
  - *To Future Directions/ research*
- **Voice**
  - *Situating the author: values, beliefs, commitments*
  - *Blommaert, 2005; c f. p. 222; ‘Voice refers to the capacity to make oneself understood as a situated subject ...’*
  - *Ivanic, 1998; cf Preface; ‘Who am I as I write this book? I am not a neutral, objective scribe conveying the objective results of my research impersonally in my writing. I am bringing to it a variety of commitments based on my own interests, values, beliefs which are built up from my own history...’*

## **Stance**

*Relationship to Data: integrity, credibility, validity*

cf Hyland, 1999; p. 99/ 101; '... in presenting informational content, writers also adopt interactional and evaluative positions. ... Stance refers to the ways that writers project themselves into their texts to communicate their integrity, credibility, involvement, and a relationship to the subject matter and their readers'.

(Hyland, K 1999 'Disciplinary Discourses: writer stance in research articles' in Candlin, C & Hyland, K (eds.) Writing Texts, Processes and Practices Longman pp. 99-121)

... even where authors attempted to argue that they were not adopting a stance, not taking a position with respect to their data which remained objective and detached, in fact they were always signalling issues of integrity, credibility, etc. with respect to the data and their relationship to it. '

(Street, B 2009 'Hidden' Features of Academic Paper Writing Working Papers in Educational Linguistics, UPenn Vol. 24, no 1, pp. 1-17)

## **Signalling:**

*Brief references to setting/ theory/ method (to be fleshed out in other parts of the text or already referred to earlier)*

# Recent Publications

- Lillis, T. & Scott, M. (2008) 'Defining academic literacies research: Issues of epistemology, ideology and strategy'. Journal of Applied Linguistics, 4, pp. 5-32
- Russell, D, Lea, M, Parker, J, Street, B and Donahue, T (2009) ' Exploring notions of genre in "academic literacies " and "writing across the curriculum" Bazerman et al SIGET IV
- Street, B 2009 "'Hidden' Features of Academic Paper Writing" Working Papers in Educational Linguistics, UPenn

- **Publications: Academic Literacies**

- Ivanic, R. (1998) Writing and Identity: the discorsal construction of identity in academic writing Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ivanic, R. (2004). *Discourses of writing and learning to write. Language and Education, 18(3), 220-245.*
- Jones, C, Street, B and Turner, J 2000 Student Writing in the University: Cultural and Epistemological Issues John Benjamins: Amsterdam
- Kress, G and Street, B 2006 'Multi-Modality and Literacy Practices' Foreword to Travel notes from the New Literacy Studies: case studies of practice. edited by K. Pahl and J. Rowsell Multilingual Matters; Clevedon pp vii-x
- Lea, M and Stierer, B 1999 New Contexts for Student Writing in Higher Education (Open University Press/ Higher Education Research Association: Buckingham
- Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: an academic literacies approach. Studies in Higher Education, 23(2), 157-172.
- Lea, M.R. & Street, B. (1999) Writing as academic literacies: understanding textual practices in higher education, in: C.N. Candlin & K. Hyland (Eds) Writing: Texts, Processes and Practices (pp. 62-81). London: Longman.
- Lillis, T 2006 in Ganobcsik-Williams , L 2006 Ed. Teaching Academic Writing in UK Higher Education; theories, practices and models. Palgrave Macmillan; Basingstoke
- Lillis, T. M. (2001). Student writing: access, regulation, desire. London: Routledge.

# **Publications: Widening Participation programme and Letter**

## **Widening Participation**

- Lea, M and Street, B 2006 “The ‘Academic Literacies’ Model: Theory and Applications” Theory into Practice Fall Vol. 45, no 4 pp. 368-377
- Leung, C and, Safford, K (2005) ‘Non-traditional students in higher education: EAL and literacies’ in Literacies Across Educational Contexts: Mediating teaching and learning Ed. Brian Street (Caslon Press: Philadelphia)
- Street, B and Scalone, P 2006 Scalone) Academic Language Development Programme (Widening Participation) in BAAL / Equinox Publishing: London pp. 121-135

## **Letter**

- Gebre, A, Rogers, A, Street, B and Openjuru, G 2009 Everyday Literacies in Africa: ethnographic studies of literacy and numeracy practices in Ethiopia Fountain Publishers: Kampala