

Commonality and Individuality in Academic Discourse

Maurizio Gotti (ed).

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“Identity is a matter of individuality and of sameness” writes the Editor Gotti, and in this volume the contributors explore not only individuality but also shared disciplinary norms in academic speech and writing. Writers tend to write in a given way but their individuality is apparently altered by many factors, such as cultural, first-language, disciplinary and academic expectations. This is the object of study of this book.

This interesting volume is divided into three parts: the first explores the tension between collective and individual discourse features, the second section deals with the output of individual scholars and how their discourse style has varied over the years. The final section deals with emergent genres that have not yet established common standards and are thus lacking in imposed norms.

In the first section, professional identity is explored in five papers. HYLAND presents two sub-corpora of writings by two well-known linguists: Debbie Cameron, who appears assertive and combative and John Swales, whose writings appear reflective and highly personal. The writings show that despite differing high-frequency features, authors can use different rhetorical devices to present differing identities and engage readers. The second contribution by EDWARDS explores how communicative rationality and identity are instantiated in spoken genres of academic debates among professional. The author examines student debates to identify how the professional persona develops. In the contribution by THOMPSON, the developing professional persona is identified in a longitudinal examination of student writings from the British Academic Written Corpus (BAWE). Here the authors examine frequencies of two markers: first person pronouns as well as “it+BE+ADJ+to\that”. Similarly, in a paper by ANDERSON, HARGRAVES and OWTRAM, the way in which authorship, readership and pedagogical responsibilities may alter writer identity is explored among junior doctoral students. Collective and individual identity in a spoken corpus of frontal lectures in business studies is examined by CRAWFORD-CAMICIOTTOLI.

Breaking the rules of professional communication is the theme common to the papers presented in the second section of this volume which highlights the variations in academic writing of individual scholars. BONDI compares markers in the writings of Douglas Dowd, a historical economist, against features of both a historical and an economics corpus. Similarly POPPI traces how author identity varies in a corpus culled from five revisions of a well-known text in economics by Paul Samuelson. POPPI points out that Samuelson becomes more detached and authoritative over the years but with increasing dialogism as befits a textbook. GOTTI examines identity in the writings of John Neville Keynes' *General theory of employment* and identifies Keynes' argumentative strategies, lexical items and metaphor to achieve his perlocutionary goals. The boundary between strictly academic writing and its popularisation is examined by KERMA. In this paper, metaphor in the early writings of a well-known Germanics academic Kate Burridge is compared with similar metaphor in her popularisation of gardening information. Religious identity in the writings of Charles Darwin is the topic of investigation by CHRISTIANSEN as seen by his choice of lexis and the scientific schemata used. Data taken from an online website of the complete works of Darwin were marked for words having religious meaning and frequencies were compared with both a scientific corpus and a biblical corpus. Correlations and conclusions about Darwin's religious and scientific identity in different periods of his life are proposed. Rounding up this section, PÉREZ-LLANTADA examines the case studies of two Spanish academics by comparing markers in early writings in English with their later publications and relates how these markers trace author development of a professional identity.

In the final section of this volume, the common thread tying papers together is the presence or absence of commonality among specific of emerging academic genres. The genre of claims and provisos in linguistic research articles is examined by SOLLY, who proposes a dialogic rhetorical value of this genre. GESUATO examines the language of review guidelines as used for blind peer review in various disciplines. Such prescriptive review discourse of this genre creates a framework for peer review which in turn affects the structure and content of the academic literature. BROMWICH examines a corpus of double-blind peer review comments to identify rhetorical devices and create wordlists of the most common lexical groups used to criticise legal research article manuscripts. Engagement with conference participants

is the topic of CAMPAGNA's treatment self/otherness in a small corpus of PowerPoint presentations. This new text-type does not conform with research article genre and may be considered a new communicative genre with hybrid spoken/written features.

In the constructivist view, "identity" is discursively created, as shown by research on natural examples of family talk, workplace interaction, school meetings (Ochs, 1993; Schiffrin, 1996; Tannen, 2007) and in the academy, through speakers' comments on the academic presentations, questions, criticisms, challenges or praise. Identity as a member of the global academic discourse community is claimed through a series of "social acts" and "stances", in a collaborative work achieved through negotiation between interactants.

The papers presented in this volume share the characteristic of using both quantitative corpus techniques and qualitative discourse analysis and thus furnish an interesting overview of current research methodologies. The question of how identity is expressed in the academy is varied but corpus studies present in this volume rely heavily on identifying frequencies of identity markers such as personal referents ("I", "we"), stance adverbials, impersonal passives, non-factive reporting verbs and directives. At the level above-the-sentence, authors identify the frequencies of markers such as positive/negative evaluation, meta-text and interactional elements such as humour, hedging devices and other perlocutionary strategies.

This volume covers many issues in the academy and is an excellent and up-to-date review of this field. In particular, it would be of major interest to language instructors, graduate students and other linguistics professionals because of its enriching areas for application to pedagogy at a tertiary level, especially in the preparation of language teachers. Perhaps it may not have been possible to deal more in depth with sociolinguistic issues such as "face" (Spencer-Oatey, 2007) or correlations with authorial variables like gender or academic standing but despite that, the editor has done a magnificent job in treading the fine line of academic language and identity in a scholarly manner, supported by data from corpus studies. The use of corpus data is one of the many strong points of this volume. Another strong point is the inclusion of papers dealing with the formation of the academic "persona". This is an excellent feature but it would have been added to the volume if studies on trans-national identity had been included such as that done in the past by Cmerjrková and Danes (1997) or Fløttum and Breivega (2002).

Having said that, however, I feel that this volume is an excellent contribution to ESP/EAP research and pedagogy.

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