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## **BOOK REVIEWS AND DISCIPLINARY DISCOURSES: Defining a genre**

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Genre analysis attempting to map down the repertoire of genres used in academia have contributed to reading and writing pedagogies in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). With the objective of contributing to the definition of an academic written genre, this paper presents the analysis of the discourse organization of sixty academic book reviews in Linguistics, Economics, and Chemistry, published in 1990. 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. The analysis revealed that, although book reviews show regularities in information form, function, and content, some variation occurs in terms of how reviewers realize evaluation and description moves across disciplinary boundaries. The results suggest that this variation is produced by the reviewers' tendency to respond to differences in epistemological organization of the three fields such as the object of study, the methodologies commonly adopted, and the literary tradition, indicating connections between text and context. The study indicates that discursive practices in the disciplines have to be considered in EAP teaching in order to help learners develop more critical and effective reading and writing competencies.

### **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, and Ventola (in

press) on abstracts). 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 the evaluative language in book reviews may reveal the different values and traditions in certain fields (see, for example, Becher, 1981, 1987), and this information about disciplinary cultures may prove a relevant tool in EAP reading and writing. More specifically, knowledge about practices in specific fields may help learners develop a more appropriate and contextualized understanding of how academic genres function (Haas, 1994).

Moreover, 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 higher-status texts such as the research article for refereed journals. Therefore, book reviews open the door to junior scholars, to the non-elite, while also offering 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 academia. 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 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 book reviews 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 among the overload of readings in university courses.

In this paper, I will present the results of a genre-analytical study of book reviews (BR) in English from three disciplines—linguistics, chemistry, and economics. The choice of three disciplines relate to the need for parameters when discussing how BR 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 BR in the other two fields.

Linguistics was chosen because of the obvious interest of the author in her area of study. 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 academia 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 others that are placed in two different fields. Therefore, assuming that there is a basic rhetorical organization of the genre that any exemplar of BR will have, the hypothesis is that variations from this basic description found in BR can be credited to the differences in the epistemic organization of academic disciplines.

#### DEFINING THE BOOK REVIEW AS A GENRE

BR are seen here as 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, 1995), 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 because, firstly, analogous to a genre, the BR comprises a set of communicative events, i.e., a set of relationships between people that are acting in a given social context (a scientific journal) and performing certain roles. These roles are commonly associated with that occasion and with certain goals, i.e., in the case of BR, 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 BR using previous knowledge of academia in general and of disciplinary<sup>1</sup> culture in particular (content

schemata), and previous knowledge about generic textual features of BR (formal schemata). In addition, appropriate reading and writing skills enable these expert members to bring to the text adequate expectations about the potential content and form. Finally, the communicative purposes of introducing and evaluating new 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 BR 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 that are usually found in concrete examples of BR. The prototype defined here however, points towards propensities in the genre not to absolute accountability of rhetorical moves (Swales, 1994, personal communication).

## METHODOLOGY

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 that 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 encompasses a series of steps, smaller functional units or speech acts (e.g., reporting, questioning) that realize the writer's intentions in accordance with the constraints imposed by the genre. The resulting pattern of moves and steps constitutes the information structure that can define an exemplar of a given genre. In the case of BR, a move of 'Describing the book' advances the reviewer's intentions in, for example, describing the book to the reader. Smaller parts of this move that alone or together with other steps 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)'.

In each move, certain linguistic expressions are frequently used as ‘unanalyzed chunks of language used in certain predictable contexts’ that function as discourse devices (‘lexical phrases’ for Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992; ‘metadiscourse markers’ for Vande Kopple, 1985), signaling the rhetorical function of that passage in the text. Thus the reviewer can open the BR 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.

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

#### RHETORICAL MOVES AND STEPS IN BOOK REVIEWS

Four rhetorical moves with their correspondent steps 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 book in the broader field of study to which it relates.

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#### Move 1 INTRODUCING THE BOOK

Step 1 Defining the general topic of the book

and/or

Step 2 Informing about potential readership

and/or

Step 3 Informing about the author

and/or

Step 4 Making topic generalizations

and/or

Step 5 Inserting book in the field

Move 2 OUTLINING THE BOOK

Step 6 Providing general view of the organization of the book

and/or

Step 7 Stating the topic of each chapter

and/or

Step 8 Citing extra-text material

Move 3 HIGHLIGHTING PARTS OF THE BOOK

Step 9 Providing focused evaluation

Move 4 PROVIDING CLOSING EVALUATION OF THE BOOK

Step 10A Definitely recommending/disqualifying the book

or

Step 10B Recommending the book despite indicated shortcomings

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Figure 1 Schematic description of rhetorical moves in book reviews

Allowing for certain variation in order, in the corpus, besides defining the topic of the book (Step 1), the first sentence usually informs about the potential readership for the book (Step 2):

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

Move 1 can also inform about the author's previous experience (Step 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.

Finally, the reviewer can relate the new material to the body of disciplinary knowledge, either by making topic generalizations (Step 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 (Step 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., what 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. Step 6 provides a general account of the order in which topics/parts/chapters are organized in the book through the use of lexical phrases 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). Step 7 zooms into each chapter, bringing increasing amount of details with lexical phrases such as the introductory chapter illustrates X; chapter 2 presents a historic overview of Y. When both steps are present, they usually go from general to specific:

[L#1] (Step 5) Following an introduction by the authors, the book is divided into three parts. (Step 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] (Step 5) There are twelve case studies as well as an introductory essay by Barber... (Step 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 of Step 6 (80%) in comparison to the other two areas. When Step 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 Step 7 are absolutely more frequent (respectively, 100% and



90%) than general overviews (70% and 50%). This tendency may bear some relation to text length.

The average length of BRs is 968 words but as a rule, chemistry BRs were found to be much shorter (average of 557 words) than those in economics (975 words) and linguistics (1,374 words). Since detailed description and evaluation of the book (Step 7) is less frequently found in the chemistry corpus, 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 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 Step 8, 'Citing extra-text material'. Lexical phrases 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] (Step 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 glossary, and an appendix of names and abbreviations.

Although the results for Step 8 in linguistics and chemistry are the same, an analysis of the frequency of reference to extra-text 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 (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 Step 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).

The greater significance of extra-text material for chemists can be credited to the very nature of the disciplinary object of study which, at the most basic level, involves periodical tables, graphs, etc. But more importantly, due to the fast pace with which scientific

advances occur in chemistry, speed in information exchange assumes great significance. 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. Additional evidence of this clear preference of chemists for readily providing a general view on the book is provided by the tendency to include information about extra-text material in the first paragraph of BRs in chemistry (30%) in comparison with linguistics (10%) and economics (none). Since these additional sections are not necessarily present in all books, this is an optional step 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 BR, 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, differently from the general descriptive function of Move 2 and apart from the evaluative character conveyed by terms of praise and blame appearing throughout the text, Move 3 appears independently as a stretch of discourse where reviewers choose specific parts of the book to highlight, becoming specially subjective in

their comments. Here, lexical phrases signaling a shift in focus to evaluation (in bold) are used:

[C#10] (Step 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] (Step 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] (Step 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... and I think the book would have a wider readership if...

As the discussion above shows, Move 3 is concerned with highlighting the best and the worst in books, giving a summarized account of what caught the reviewers attention, the criteria followed, the reasons for the evaluation, and examples or data from the book to sustain the evaluation.

Since evaluation is the defining feature of the genre, it would be fair to expect an incidence of 100% and, in fact, this third move was present in 55 of the 60 BRs (91.67%), especially in economics where focused evaluation is present in 100% of the texts, while in linguistics, this frequency is 90% and in chemistry, 85%. In addition, economics can be said to be the most evaluative among the three areas because its reviewers dedicate larger portions of texts to evaluation than in the other disciplines.

The lack of this typical element in five of the BRs may be explained by the fact that the closing move (Move 4) also provides evaluation and is present in every text where Move 3

is missing. Therefore all reviews have at least one kind of evaluation, realized by Move 3 or by Move 4 (or most frequently by both).

In chemistry, this move is shorter and involves fewer subjective comments and less background information about the literature on 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] (Step 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] (Step 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 BR 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] (Step 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] (Step 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] (Step 9) Taylor develops a neat formal model of choice among consumption activities involving primary and slave processes which are hedonic opposites.

[E#10] (Step 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 related to writers of research articles but could 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 review 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] (Step 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] (Step 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 long 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] (Step 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.

Finally, the closing move, Providing final evaluation, is explicitly signaled at the beginning of the last paragraph by a lexical phrase such as 'In sum', where the speaker signals to the interlocutor that the text is reaching its end. In this final section, the reviewer's point of view is clearly stated to the reader in a definitive appraisal of the book, i.e., whether the book is worth reading or not.

Move 4 provides a final evaluation, thus in addition to functioning as a recommendation for the reader, serves the purpose of closing the text. Move 4 rounds up the text in a final evaluation of the whole book, breaking up with the detailed perspective adopted in Move 3. Lexical phrases 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 (Step 10A), or a combination of the two (Step 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.

## CONCLUSION

Differences in BR in the areas studied here suggest that disciplinary matrices have diverse modes of proposing knowledge. The results of this study indicate that BR in chemistry are less evaluative than the ones in economics and linguistics. One main difference between chemistry from the other two areas is the preference for shorter descriptive objective texts. 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<sup>3</sup>. In chemistry, recency in publication is a decisive criterion for quality used by reviewers in praising new publications. Correspondingly, the role played by the readership constitutes a criterion in linguistics. Analyzing the textual evidence, mathematics and models, recency, and readership appeared as crucial values, thus book reviewing as an academic activity takes into account specific disciplinary consensual ideals (Kuhn, 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 lexical phrases commonly used to realize each move can give learners a clear picture of how information is commonly organized BR in refereed journals in English. However, besides awareness of information structure, writers should know what type of information is relevant in their respective academic areas so that these writers 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 organizations in chemistry, linguistics and economics can produce different configurations of text features. The study of BR associated with their context of production is relevant in that it provides EAP writing instruction with more accurate information on how academic genres perform a



function in disciplinary matrices. Still a more in-depth discussion of the possible causes for differences in epistemic modes is much needed.

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