PhD revisited: Established and emerging business genres

Genre analyses of corporate annual reports and corporate environmental reports

AUD SOLBJØRG SKULSTAD
University of Bergen

ABSTRACT This chapter reports on a doctoral study (Skulstad 1997) which examined an established and an emerging genre within a specific professional domain, using genre analysis as a theoretical and methodological framework. The doctoral thesis was put within an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context, and the chapter explains how this study relates to the use of authentic texts, materials development and the development of vocationally oriented language learners’ genre awareness.

KEYWORDS genre analysis | rhetorical organisation | rhetorical movement | English for Specific Purposes courses | genre awareness.

1. The chapter presents main results of a doctoral study (Skulstad, 1997) from the University of Bergen, emphasising its practical implications for the teaching of English within a Norwegian educational context. The doctoral thesis was published by Norwegian Academic Press (Høyskoleforlaget) in a slightly updated version in 2002 (Skulstad, 2002).

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INTRODUCTION

The doctoral study reported on in this chapter set out to examine rhetorical and textual patterns (including multimodal patterns) of an established genre and an emerging genre within a specific professional domain. Hence, genre emerged as the most central concept of this doctoral study. As will be apparent from the theory section of this chapter, there were a number of definitions of this term at the time. As a starting point, we may say that genres represent conventional ways of expressing meaning within a specific culture or professional community, responding to specific communicative purposes (cf. Swales, 1990, see theory section below).

A basic assumption of the thesis was that there are important differences between an established and an emerging genre in terms of actual textual practices and approaches required by genre analysts. At the time of the study (the early 1990s), there was a growing interest in environmental issues among governments, companies and in the public sphere. One of the emerging genres related to this growing interest was corporate environmental reports, and this genre had not yet been researched. Corporate annual reports were considered as a good example of a well-established genre within the business domain that allowed contrast with a new genre. The study also aimed to identify textual manifestations of the relationship between communicative purposes of the genre and strategic needs acknowledged by members of the relevant discourse community. Another important aim was to illustrate that data provided by genre analysis can be utilised in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching approaches. ESP courses are often referred to as vocationally oriented courses, and the most relevant type of ESP course for this doctoral study was English for Business.

In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a growing interest in genre definitions and genre analysis, and this interest also fed into the field of language pedagogy. In the doctoral study reported on here, genre analysis meant an exploration of the linguistic, rhetorical and multimodal (mainly visual) conventions of a particular discourse community as manifested by the rhetorical actions in which the members of that community participated. Put more simply, genre analysis involved an examination of the interdependence of communicative purposes and generic conventions. Luke (1994, viii) raised the question why genre had become of such pedagogical importance and held that part of the reason was “the overt mixing, blurring and shifting of cultural forms that characterises late-capitalist cultures and economies”. He added, however, that genre mixing is not a new phenomenon, but that these processes of genre mixing, blurring, and shifting “are accelerated under fast capitalism and a globalised economy” (Luke, 1994, viii). Hence, there seemed to be an increasingly urgent need to develop learners’ genre awareness as one way
of coping with these processes of genre mixing, blurring, shifting and also the emergence of new genres.

A prerequisite for developing learners’ genre awareness is to bring authentic texts from different genres into the classroom. Thus, we also need to develop ways of analysing established and emerging genres inside and outside specific professional domains.

The primary research question of the doctoral study reported on was:

What essential differences and similarities can be identified when it comes to rhetorical movement and textual patterns of an established versus an emerging genre within the same professional domain?

The two types of reports chosen were issued by British companies. The analysis of rhetorical movement was a central aspect of the type of genre analysis performed in this doctoral thesis. The term rhetorical movement (also used by Swales, 1990) here refers to textual manifestations of the communicative purpose of the genres and the role of the genre within the discourse community in question. In the case of the established genre, this involved an identification of rhetorical moves and steps. I defined rhetorical moves as discriminative elements of rhetorical organisation that identify and capture the communicative purposes of the genre. Steps were defined as rhetorical strategies for realising the communicative purposes indicated by the names of the moves.

It was expected that the conventionality of rhetorical movement would be different in an established versus an emerging genre. Thus, in the case of the latter, the aim was to identify emerging textual patterns. Included in the term textual patterns were linguistic as well as multimodal textual patterns. In an established genre, however, it was expected that it would be possible to identify conventional rhetorical moves and steps made by the authors, as well as the use of conventional multimodal strategies.

REVIEW

An inspiration for the analysis of rhetorical movement was the pioneering work carried out by Charles Bazerman and John Swales. In his seminal article, Bazerman (1981) documented disciplinary variations in introductions to research articles. Similarly, Swales (1981, 1990) examined rhetorical conventions of research article introductions within different disciplines. His research, however, documented the rhetorical moves and steps authors conventionally made across disciplines. These results were visualised by means of a Move-Step model called the Create a research space (CARS) model (Swales, 1981, 1990). His type of analysis sparked similar studies of genres within academia. Lindeberg (1994), for instance, analysed rhetorical movement in discussion and conclusion sections of research
articles within the fields of finance, management and marketing, using six major rhetorical moves, such as “Restate” indicating restatement of research gap, purpose, aim, method or theory, and “Limitations”, stating limitations of the present research (Lindeberg, 1994, p. 649).

Move-Step models outside the academic field existed while I was carrying out my doctoral study, but they were relatively rare. One of the studies that did exist was Bhatia’s (1993) analysis of sales promotion letters and job application letters. He found that these two genres were both persuasive in nature and their communicative purposes were reflected in a similar rhetorical organisation:

- Establishing credentials
- Introducing the offer/introducing candidature
- Offering incentives
- Enclosing documents
- Soliciting response
- Using pressure tactics
- Ending politely (Bhatia, 1993, pp. 46–68).

Another example of a study within the business domain was Bloor and Pindi’s (1990) research on economics forecasts. They analysed the functional framework, using the terms schema\(^2\), episode, and move. The forecasting event was identified as the only schema, and this in turn was split into the two episodes “reporting” and “predicting”. Each of the episodes was split into two obligatory and one optional move.

Genre analyses were also carried out using M. A. K. Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics. An example of this was Ventola’s (1987) study of service encounters, which means a dialogue in a shop, a library, a tourist information centre, etc. The communicative purpose of service encounters is to exchange a commodity (goods or information). She identified conventional discourse patterns (schemata) used to realise this communicative purpose such as the fact that seeking advice was followed by giving advice.

In other words, there had been little research into rhetorical organisation of genres outside academia. In addition, to my knowledge there were no previous studies that focused on conventional rhetorical patterns in established and emerging genres in a comparative perspective.

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2. *Schema* was coined by the psychologist Bartlett in his study of human memory (Bartlett, 1967/1932). Nunan (1999, p. 133) sees schema as “mental film scripts” and by this he means that human knowledge is organised into interrelated patterns that are constructed from previous experience, and these patterns enable us to make predictions about future experience.
THEORY

Two broad frameworks were relevant for the doctoral study reported on: genre and ESP teaching. In other words, genre and genre analysis were seen in light of ESP teaching.

The concept of genre can be traced as far back as the work of Aristotle. In more recent times, three approaches within the Anglo-American and Australian research traditions have conventionally been identified. These are ESP studies, (North American) New Rhetoric and the Sydney School. Of these three traditions, genre analysis within ESP studies is the one that emerged most clearly from an L2 context, and the doctoral study was rooted within this context. The most prominent scholar within the ESP tradition is John Swales, and he defines genre in the following way:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert member of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style (Swales, 1990, p. 58).

Swales’s definition emphasises the relationship between rhetorical movement and the communicative purposes typically experienced by members of what Swales (1990) terms “the parent discourse community”. By this term he refers to members of a social group or an academic discipline who may be seen to “own” the genre in the sense that they regularly produce and/or consume texts that belong to the genre in question. A consequence of this definition is that communicative purpose is the main criterion for genre classification in the case of genre analysis.

Traditionally, the term English for Specific Purposes has meant different things to different scholars and practitioners. One interpretation is found among people who have emphasised the notion of special English (such as technical terms within a specific professional domain) as being central. Sager, Dungworth and McDonald (1980, p. 69) define special language as “semi-autonomous, complex semiotic systems based on and derived from general language; their use presupposes special education and is restricted to communication among specialists in the same or closely related fields”. The doctoral study reported on here, however, sees special language as only a small part of the competence needed in order to become a full member of a specific discourse community. Another interpretation of English for Specific Purposes is to emphasise the purposes of learning English and it implies that these purposes can be more readily identified compared to
“general” courses. The definition of an ESP course underlying the doctoral study reported on here is that it is a type of course where decisions about syllabus design and methodology are based upon the learners’ specific purpose in learning English. These purposes are seen to be closely tied to the need for being able to operate successfully in the central genres of a specific discourse community.

METHODOLOGY

The doctoral study was conducted within the field of genre analysis. It was strongly rooted in linguistics, but the motivation for carrying out the study stemmed from a research interest in English didactics. Methods from linguistics were chosen for the actual data analyses and the discussion of theoretical framework and practical implications of the results was based on English didactics.

RESEARCH DESIGN

From the outset, it was decided that including an established and an emerging genre in my corpus would add a new dimension to genre analysis. Corporate annual reports are a particularly good example of a genre within the domain of business. First, it is conventionalised and it is easy to get hold of for people outside the parent discourse community. Second, corporate annual reports are recognised by participants who use this nomenclature (genre name) when referring to these types of texts. Third, this genre is heterogeneous in the types of discourses found in these documents. Hence, this may serve to illustrate the fact that heterogeneity is usually no impediment to genre classification as performed in the doctoral study. Fourth, corporate annual reports form part of a complex system of information between a company and present and potential investors. Similarly, corporate environmental reports was an obvious choice of an emerging genre in 1993 when my data collection started. The so-called green movement of the 1980s and 1990s promoted green consumerism and a general “rising green awareness” (Yearley, 1991, p. 80), which was also reflected in corporate communication.

Requests for corporate annual reports and corporate environmental documents were sent to 88 companies in Britain. This resulted in 72 annual reports from 70 different companies. The corpus was split into a primary and a secondary corpus, and the criterion for being grouped in the primary corpus was that these particular companies had also sent me environmental reports as a response to my request. The secondary corpus consisted of annual reports issued by companies that had not yet issued environmental documents of the type I was looking for. These doc-
uments were consulted, but not analysed in the same systematic way. As for environmental documents, the requests resulted in a corpus of twenty documents from 19 different British companies. In other words, one company sent two types of environmental reports. Thus, the primary corpus of annual reports consisted of 19 documents and the corpus of environmental reports counted twenty documents.

Inspired by Swales’s (1990) analysis of introductions to research articles, I decided to carry out a Move-Step analysis of the introductory section of corporate annual reports – the chairman’s statement. As a supplement to the analysis of chairmen’s statements, one chairman’s statement and one news report were compared. The criterion for the selection of texts was that the two documents dealt with the same topic – they both reported on the performance of one specific business company (Pilkington). The news report was printed in the Financial Times, June 12, 1992 and the chairman’s statement appeared in a corporate annual report issued by Pilkington at about the same time.

The research design consisted of qualitative data and different types of genre analysis were carried out. Table 2.1 gives an overview of the data, methods, and type of analysis used in the doctoral study. Qualitative analyses were used.

**TABLE 2.1.** An overview of the data, methods, and types of analysis used in the doctoral study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The process of analysis</th>
<th>Qualitative analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Chairmen’s statements**<sup>1</sup>  
Step 1: 19 (primary corpus)/53 (secondary corpus) | Genre analysis – Move-Step analysis |
| **Corporate annual reports**  
Step 2: 19 (primary corpus)/53 (secondary corpus) | Multimodal analysis (visuasl) |
| A comparison of one chairman’s statement and one news report  
Step 3: 1+1 | Textual analysis |
| **Corporate environmental reports**  
Step 4: 20 | Genre analysis  
Multimodal analysis (visuals) |

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1. All the chairmen in my corpus are male.

GENRE ANALYSIS

Genres have conventional forms, functions, and meanings within specific social and cultural contexts. Obviously, the degree of conventionality is different in the case of emerging genres compared to established ones, and consequently the type of genre analysis needs to be different. As pointed out above, a Move-Step analysis was chosen for the analysis of chairmen’s statements about corporate annual reports. This type of analysis identifies the rhetorical movement writers or speakers make when operating in a specific genre or part of a genre. First, linguistic signals indicating the beginning and change of rhetorical steps were identified. Examples are anticipatory lexical signals (Hoey, 1983) such as “Looking forward to 1993…” indicating a shift to projecting the future or looking ahead and “Our policy is …” indicating that an announcement of corporate policy will follow. Lexical words and phrases such as “assurance”, “reassurance”, and the verb “thank” gave important clues as to the communicative function of a clause or a sentence. The choice of subheadings in the chairmen’s statements, although sometimes misleading, was also taken as an indication of how the different sections were meant to be interpreted by the reader. After a preliminary classification into rhetorical steps, comprehension of this type of text, background knowledge about the discourse community and the role of corporate annual reports within that community facilitated grouping the different steps into a set of moves. Steps that were interpreted as serving a similar communicative purpose were grouped into the same rhetorical move. Next, the names of the different moves and steps were decided on, and in doing so I again observed the use of subheadings in the reports and the writers’ choice of vocabulary. The result of the analysis was the Relationships and Confidence (RECON) model presented below. Finally, the chairmen’s statements in the primary corpus were analysed again. This time the RECON model was used as a starting point for analysis to check if the Move-Step patterns were generally in agreement with the ordering and the names assigned to the various moves and steps.

In the emerging genre of corporate environmental reports, only emerging textual patterns were identified, instead of a Move-Step analysis as that of the corporate annual reports. However, also in the case of environmental reports the focus was on identifying rhetorical strategies employed by the writers to realise the communicative purposes of the genre. In other words, the main difference between emerging textual patterns on the one hand and steps on the other is the level of conventionality of these rhetorical strategies. These strategies used by the writers of environmental reports were identified in a similar way as the steps in
the case of chairmen’s statements, and the communicative purposes were identified in a parallel way to the moves of chairmen’s statements.

In addition, the use of metadiscourse in the introduction of the corporate environmental reports was analysed as it was expected that writers of an emerging genre would use metadiscourse to guide and direct the readers. Here, Mauranen’s (1993) categories action markers (the explanation is), connectors (however), previews (we will discuss distribution in the next section), and reviews (as suggested above) were used. The analysis of metadiscourse concentrated on discourse elements which signal the rhetorical action taken by the writers, textual connectors, discourse anticipating later parts of the reports, discourse that helps readers to interpret the purpose of issuing this type of document, and finally, discourse which repeats or summarises an earlier part of the text.

MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS

Providing a complete multimodal analysis of annual reports and environmental reports within corporate communication was outside the scope of the doctoral study. The analysis was limited to the use of visuals in these reports. This type of analysis was inspired by Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1990, 1996) book. Some interesting examples of visuals were chosen for a more detailed analysis. The categories used in these illustrative examples were foregrounding and backgrounding, camera angle (mainly in terms of power relations), visual modality (e.g. colour saturation, colour differentiation, contextualisation versus decontextualisation) and Given-New structure. The category of realistic versus symbolic photographs was also used (Nielsen & Johansen, 1996). In addition, the communicative purpose(s) of visuals in a Swalesian sense was central in the analysis, such as the argumentative function of visuals in realising the communicative purpose of the report. The use of visuals in the two types of reports was compared where relevant.

Above all, the analysis of visuals aimed to show that this type of report was multisemiotic, and at the same time it was realised that the interplay between visuals and language is a complex issue that would deserve a study in its own right.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

A textual analysis was carried out in the case of a newspaper report and a chairman’s statement, both reporting on the same issue. The motivation for carrying out this analysis was first that the genre names of annual reports and news reports indicate that a central verbal behaviour by the authors of these genres is reporting (see-
ing report as a speech act), or the function of “macroassertion” (van Dijk, 1988, p. 27). Second, it was thought that this analysis would provide a useful supplement to the Move-Step analysis carried out in the case of chairmen’s statements. Third, the analysis illustrated how corporate annual reports were used in another genre. A fourth motivation was that as the subject matter is the same in the two texts, it would illustrate that factors other than content are decisive in terms of the rhetorical organisation and choice of linguistic strategies.

The analysis concentrated on the rhetorical organisation and the use of linguistic strategies. The basis for the analysis was the RECON model of chairman’s statements (see below) and van Dijk’s (1988) news schema. Linguistic strategies were analysed from the point of view of their pragmatic function. Examples include verbal reactions (reported speech or direct quotation) and words used to describe the context, the industries, etc. Differences and similarities were identified, and the two types of genre texts were analysed in terms of type of audience and communicative purpose.

RESULTS
The results show differences in rhetorical movement and textual patterns in the two types of business reports. At the same time, there are important similarities related to the overall communicative purpose of creating a favourable corporate image. Strong parallels were identified between the use of verbal and visual strategies. The analysis of a news report and a chairman’s statement served to illustrate how differing communicative purposes in the two texts resulted in differences in rhetorical organisation, selection of content items and linguistic strategies. The doctoral study also produced results in terms of the assigning of genre and sub-genre membership. The latter is only briefly mentioned below.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF CHAIRMEN’S STATEMENTS
The Move-Step analysis of the section known as “chairman’s statement” in British corporate annual reports resulted in the identification of a Move-Step model that I called the Relationships and Confidence (RECON) model. In other words, this model shows the rhetorical movement writers of British chairmen’s statements conventionally make. The model may be applied as a tool for analysing this particular section of corporate annual reports. But above all, the RECON model captures in a schematic form the rhetorical moves and steps conventionally made by writers of chairmen’s statements, and the communicative purposes of this section.
The nomenclature of the three different moves of the RECON model reflects the interpersonal nature of chairmen’s statement: Move 1 “Establishing relationships”, Move 2 “Maintaining confidence” and Move 3 “Reinforcing the relationships” between the company and the readers. A move may be realised by several alternative steps and there are possibilities to recycle moves and steps.

TABLE 2.2. The relationships and Confidence (RECON) Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOVE 1: ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optional Step A:</td>
<td>Salutation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Step B:</td>
<td>Providing the background for the present scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1:</td>
<td>Summary statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
<td>Providing figures describing company performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3:</td>
<td>Selecting aspects of the past financial year</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOVE 2: MAINTAINING CONFIDENCE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1:</td>
<td>Projecting the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 1 A:</td>
<td>Announcing corporate strategies, policies and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 B:</td>
<td>Predicting the future/looking ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Step C:</td>
<td>Signalling honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Step D:</td>
<td>Providing reassurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOVE 3: REINFORCING THE RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1:</td>
<td>Reviewing board changes (if any)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
<td>Acknowledging credit to management and employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3:</td>
<td>Closing statement of reassurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4:</td>
<td>Signature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS OF THE COMPARISON OF A CHAIRMAN’S STATEMENT AND A NEWS REPORT

The writer of a chairman’s statement is free to add his or her personal comments. A journalist writing a news report, on the other hand, is expected to give a more
objective account of events. Image creation is an overall aim of corporate annual reports, whereas a news report may want to attract the reader’s attention in a crowded field of media communication. Here, I will briefly comment on one textual example from each of the documents to illustrate some interesting relationships between communicative aims and textual responses. The lead in a news report usually has a summarising function:

PILKINGTON, the glass maker, slashed its dividend yesterday and warned that it could not see any sign of recovery in trading conditions (Financial Times, June 12, 1992).

The opening of the chairman’s statement, on the other hand, was coded as optional step B, “Providing the background for the present scene”:

Market conditions in the flat and safety glass industry during what has become the longest recession since the second World War have been the worst anyone can remember. The major users of the Group’s products – the building and automotive industries – have been particularly hard hit (Pilkington plc., Annual Report and Accounts, 1992, p. 2).

The quote above was printed in bold face, as is often the case with the lead of news reports. The bad performance is typically “explained” with reference to general market conditions and overall trading climate as a way of preparing the readers for the bad news to come.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

Analysis revealed that both the corporate annual reports and the corporate environmental reports in my corpus shared the overall communicative purpose of corporate image creation. However, the corporate environmental reports typically reflected the following specific communicative purposes:

a. signalling commitment and/or awareness of environmental issues
b. signalling good business practices (business ethics).

This set of communicative purposes can be summed up by four key words: informing, caring, knowing, and acting. Being an emerging genre at the time of analysis, the corporate environmental reports showed a high degree of heterogeneity in terms of communicative purposes, content and form. Still, six of the
twenty documents deviated from the majority of documents in some important ways. To capture this difference, the documents were split into two subgenres. The biggest subgenre, counting 14 documents, was referred to as environmental performance reports. Generally, this subgenre reported on the performance of the company in question regarding environmental issues, and these reports were often issued annually. The other subgenre was referred to as environmental awareness booklets, but these documents had a less well-defined form and regularity, and reporting on corporate performance was less prominent.

The doctoral thesis also documented the fact that both types of reports analysed drew on other types of discourses in addition to business discourse, such as environmental discourse, business discourse, lifeworld discourse, promotional discourse, legislative discourse, discourse associated with personal communication and so forth.

The study also concluded that the metadiscursive categories *previews* and *action markers* were used much more frequently in introductory sections of the emerging genre compared to the introductory letter (the chairman’s statements) of the established one. When a preview did appear in chairmen’s statements, it typically marked a deviation from the conventional Move-Step pattern.

**RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VISUALS**

Photographs that appeared in most of the corporate annual reports in my corpus were realistic pictures (as opposed to symbolic pictures) such as portraits of the chairman, the chief executive and members of the board, photographs of employees at work, parts of the production process, company buildings under construction, newly opened plants and so forth. The majority of the portraits of the chairman showed him in the setting of his office, or in less frequent cases, he was standing inside or outside one of the company buildings. Typically, he had eye contact with the reader and this strategy may be interpreted as a way of establishing a relationship between the chairman and the reader.

In one of the chairmen’s statements there is a full-page photograph of the chairman together with two miners down in Whitemoor mine (Figure 2.1). Their clothes are dirty and the miners have dirty faces. All three are smiling and look like they have been interrupted in the middle of a conversation. This picture suggests that the chairman is in close contact with the workers and that he is even going down into the mines to interact with the employees. Hence, this photograph was chosen with the aim of promoting a favourable corporate image.
If we turn to the corporate environmental reports in my corpus, there were photographs of equipment, production processes, members of staff, portraits of the company chairman, and so forth. These are also typical pictures of corporate annual reports. But more importantly, there were pictures directly related to environmental issues. An important communicative purpose of these reports was to show good business ethics in relation to environmental issues. The use of visuals was found to support this communicative aim. Here, I have chosen to comment on two
photographs that may serve to illustrate the results found (Figures 2.2 and 2.3). These photographs appeared in the same document (an environmental awareness booklet issued by British Coal) and show a coal power station and a nuclear power station from the outside. The coal power station is seen from a high camera angle, and this perspective makes it look smaller and insignificant. The angle and size of frame of the photograph allow large areas of green, cultivated fields surrounding the power station to be included in the picture. The argument made by means of visual communication is that the burning of coal does not have any negative effects on farming in the area.

FIGURE 2.2. Coal power station.

The photograph of the nuclear power station, on the other hand, is taken from a lower camera angle and this makes the nuclear power station look bigger compared to the coal power station. In the foreground there are a number of private houses. These houses look very small compared to the nuclear power station. The caption states that there is strong resistance from the public on environmental grounds to the extended use of this type of power station.
Visual arguments may be seen to have a stronger effect compared to verbal arguments. As Myers (1994, p. 136) states: “Any statement in words provokes an answer back, in words, but a picture does not evoke such a clear rational response”.

**DISCUSSION: CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ENGLISH DIDACTICS FIELD**

The doctoral study has shown that rhetorical organisation and rhetorical strategies (including visual strategies) are responses to communicative needs of the discourse community on the one hand, and the needs experienced by the situated writer on the other. It has also documented that writers within business domains draw on a number of different types of discourse, and that special terminology makes up a very small part. Thus, it makes sense to include a large part of “general English” in ESP courses. A consequence of the fact that full members of a specific discourse community draw on a number of different types of discourses – also outside their specific domain – is that developing ESP students’ genre awareness becomes an urgent project.
EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS: REGISTER AND RHETORICAL MOVEMENT

Up until the 1990s, ESP courses had focused largely on the teaching of specific registers, including special terminology. The doctoral study broke with this tradition and rejected the term *business register*. Instead, it drew attention to the fact that writers often break out of the typical register of business and draw on a number of different discourses and semiotic resources (such as visuals) to achieve specific communicative aims. The study claims that the most important aim of ESP courses should be to develop students’ genre awareness. Available results of genre analyses will assist teachers in using authentic texts. This has been an important rationale for identifying the rhetorical movement of chairmen’s statements in British corporate annual reports and emerging rhetorical patterns in corporate environmental reports.

The motivation for developing Move-Step models was not primarily for the purpose of genre analysis. Particularly within the Swalesian tradition, a basic idea was that the communicative purpose was reflected in the way the members of the discourse community structured the genre rhetorically (in terms of moves and steps). As Bhatia (1993, p. 21) puts it, “The communicative purpose is inevitably reflected in the interpretative cognitive structuring of the genre”. Thus, the Move-Step model of chairmen’s statements contributes to raising the awareness of the relationship between the communicative purposes of the genre (or subgenre) and rhetorical strategies used to achieve those purposes. Ideally, a Move-Step model reflects the communicative purposes of the genre and in a larger perspective it may be seen to mirror the communicative purposes of the wider discourse community. Hence, the RECON model of chairmen’s statements may be seen to be relevant to a number of genres inside and outside the business domain in that it demonstrates some important mechanisms of communication within a particular professional domain.

The doctoral study has also documented some of the ways in which strategies of visual communication are used to achieve central communicative purposes of the discourse community. Thus, it shows the importance of not ignoring multimodal strategies in the central didactic project of developing learners’ genre awareness.

METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

An important methodological contribution of the doctoral study is that it demonstrated the fact that Swales’ (1990) type of Move-Step analysis can be applied to genres used in discourse communities outside academia.
Another methodological contribution is that the doctoral study has shown that established and emerging genres require different types of analyses. “New” genres do not have an identifiable Move-Step pattern in the same way as established genres do. However, some recurrent, emerging textual patterns can be identified.

Theoretically, this study can be seen to have contributed to new insight as to genre emergence. Corporate environmental reports emerged as responses to changes in legal requirements, social conditions, political consciousness and an increased awareness of environmental issues in the public sphere. The doctoral study has captured some of this dynamic between new needs and textual and generic responses to such needs. The study has also been able to capture central features of a genre at a relatively early stage of emergence. It has demonstrated some important differences between an established and emerging genre produced by the same companies. The doctoral study has also contributed to a discussion of the concept of genre as well as to a discussion of the assigning of genre and sub-genre membership, which may be useful for the field of English didactics.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH

Swales’ starting point for carrying out a Move-Step analysis of research article introductions was that he had noticed the trouble his students had in writing the first few paragraphs of academic texts. Very few people will ever have to write a chairman’s statement, and consequently, the motivation for carrying out a Move-Step analysis of these introductory documents was somewhat different. The doctoral study argues that the RECON model can still be a useful pedagogic tool in the sense that such models capture central characteristics and patterns of communication within a specific field. More specifically, the RECON model makes explicit some important characteristics of corporate communication: corporate image creation, strategies used to maintain confidence, the relationship between informing and persuading, and so forth. In other words, L2 students may benefit from using Move-Step models such as the RECON model for analysing genres within a central professional domain related to their vocational studies.

In the 21st century, new genres seem to be emerging more quickly than before. This has to do with the use of new technologies for communication and complex social, cultural, and strategic needs. Students of English need to develop a genre awareness, which will enable them to operate also in new genres. One way of developing learners’ genre awareness is by means of explicit genre teaching (cf. the Sydney school, e.g. Christie, 2013; Christie & Martin, 2000; Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987; Skulstad, 2018). However, Move-Step models and textual pat-
terns should not be used as prescriptive tools. Instead, they should be viewed as a source of insight that may assist the learners in studying specific authentic texts. Such texts need to be brought into ESP classrooms and studied from the point of view of rhetorical movement and the relationship between rhetorical and linguistic choices and communicative purposes of the parent discourse community. Studying the relationship between communicative purposes and structure, content and style is essential for successful reception and production of genre texts within an educational setting.

Within the communicative paradigm of L2 teaching, a focus on communicative purpose, meaning, and context has always been important. Move-Step models may make these aspects clearer to L2 students, because such models may be seen to make explicit how communicative purposes act as determinants of rhetorical movement and rhetorical strategies within a specific context.

Annual reports, news reports, and environmental reports are examples of authentic texts that are easy to get hold of and use as part of an ESP course. Studying authentic texts and Move-Step models may assist L2 learners in understanding the complex relationship between communicative purposes and the discourse community that “owns” the genre or subgenre in question. Genre analysis also adds to our knowledge of a discourse community’s norms and ideologies that shape and constrain the textual practices found in a specific community.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The doctoral study reported on here may inspire students and scholars to carry out research projects that may result in teaching material for ESP courses or vocationally oriented language courses. There is still an urgent need for teaching material that ESP students may find inspiring, motivating and challenging. In other words, there is a need for more genre analyses that may be used in terms of materials development for courses within vocationally oriented language education. This need does not only apply to genres for production, but also genres for reception. The results of such genre analyses can be used by textbook authors as well as teachers.

Genre does not seem to be a buzzword to the same extent that it was in previous decades. This may be illustrated by the fact that when the English subject curriculum of the Knowledge Promotion was revised in 2013, the word *genre* was replaced by *text type* (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006/2013). There is a need for studies examining teachers’ and learners’ attitudes to the role of genre in ELT education today. There is also a need for classroom
research looking into if and how L2 teaching aims to develop learners’ genre awareness.

Research resulting in theory development is also needed, particularly research resulting in a new definition of genre which keeps the central aspects of Swales’ (1990) definition and at the same time reflects more clearly a multimodal view of communication. In the 1980s and 1990s, genre definitions reflected a focus on written and spoken discourse only, not other semiotic resources. Here are two examples:

Genres are how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them. … The term genre is used here to embrace each of the linguistically realized activity types which comprise so much of our culture (Martin, 1985, p. 250).

… discourse communities evolve their own conventions and traditions for such diverse verbal activities as running meetings, producing reports, and publicizing their activities. These recurrent classes of communicative events are the genres that orchestrate verbal life (Swales, 1998, p. 20).

With a stronger focus on the fact that a number of semiotic resources are used for communication came a need for definitions that do not only focus on language. Here is one definition of genre that takes a broader view of communication:

By defining genres as configurations of meaning, we have tried to open the door to multimodal realisations of genres, including various modalities of communication (e.g. image, music and spatial design …) (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 234).

What is lost in Martin and Rose’s (2008) definition compared to the one proposed by Swales (1990) is the central role of communicative purpose in shaping the genre.

Further theory development as to the notions of text type versus genre is also needed. Earlier specifications of major differences between the two concepts seem to have been largely forgotten. As Paltridge (1996) claims, this is an important and useful distinction. Text type used to refer to text categories based on text internal criteria. In other words, these are texts that share sets of linguistic patterns irrespective of genre (Biber, 1988). Genre, on the other hand, also includes text-external criteria such as the social and cultural context, the situational context of the specific discourse community, and mechanisms related to production and reception.
The need to develop learners’ genre awareness in language courses at all levels of education has not diminished. This applies to both written and spoken genres, and particularly to genres within specific professional domains that are relevant to the learners’ present or future needs.

The fact that this doctoral study has combined research interests in two fields, applied linguistics and English didactics, will hopefully be an inspiration for future studies in its own right.

REFERENCES


