important to note that specialist informants also have an important role to play in the description, analysis and clarification of genres. And finally, one also needs to take into account cross-cultural factors, which sometimes influence the realization and understanding of specific genres. Our primary concern in the next chapter will be to look at how inputs from all these disciplines can be exploited to arrive at a viable framework for the analysis of various academic and professional genres.

2 Approach to genre analysis

Genre analysis requires inputs from a variety of disciplines to interpret, describe and explain the rationale underlying various professional and academic genres. But first, let me define what I mean by non-fictional genre for our immediate understanding and clarification.

2.1 Definition

Taking Genre, after Swales (1981b, 1985 and 1990), *it is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s).*

There are several aspects of this definition which need further elaboration.

First, genre *is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs.* Although there are a number of other factors, like content, form, intended audience, medium or channel, that influence the nature and construction of a genre, it is primarily characterized by the communicative purpose(s) that it is intended to fulfil. This shared set of communicative purpose(s) shapes the genre and gives it an internal structure. Any major change in the communicative purpose(s) is likely to give us a different genre; however, minor changes or modifications help us distinguish sub-genres. Although it may not

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Since it was first established in the 1970s, the *Applied Linguistics and Language Study* series has become a major force in the study of practical problems in human communication and language education. Drawing extensively on empirical research and theoretical work in linguistics, sociology, psychology and education, the series explores key issues in language acquisition and language use.

Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings provides a comprehensive introduction to a relatively new and unexplored area of discourse studies. Although genre analysis has a long-established tradition in literature, the interest in the analysis of non-literary genres has been relatively recent.

Taking a descriptive and explanatory approach to the analysis of data, genre analysis focuses on providing answers to the key question in discourse studies, 'Why is a particular text-genre written in the way it is?'.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part outlines a theory of genre analysis drawing on the variety of diverse disciplines that help the system define its key features, boundaries and methodology. In the second part genre analysis is shown in action, taking texts from a wide variety of genres and analysing them, drawing linguistic insights and focusing on the conventional aspects of genre construction. The final part illustrates the use of genre analysis in language teaching, particularly English for Specific Purposes, and in language reform, especially in the writing of legislation and other public documents. Throughout the book there are extensive discussions of cross-cultural variation in many academic and professional settings, using examples from a wide range of non-native contexts.

This book will be of great value to all students of Language, Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and to teachers of English and Applied Linguistics who are interested in applied discourse analysis.

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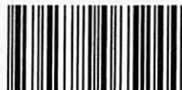

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Applied Linguistics and Language Study

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always be possible to draw a fine distinction between genres and sub-genres, communicative purpose is a fairly reliable criterion to identify and distinguish sub-genres. We shall have more on this aspect of sub-genre identification in section 2.2.3.

Second, *it most often is a highly structured and conventionalized communicative event.* Specialist members of any professional or academic community are generally credited with the knowledge of not only the communicative goals of their community but also the structure of the genres in which they regularly participate as part of their daily work. It is the cumulative result of their long experience and/or training within the specialist community that shapes the genre and gives it a conventionalized internal structure.

Third, various genres display *constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value.* This means that although the writer has a lot of freedom to use linguistic resources in any way s/he likes, s/he must conform to certain standard practices within the boundaries of a particular genre. It is possible for a specialist to exploit the rules and conventions of a genre in order to achieve special effects or private intentions, as it were, but s/he cannot break away from such constraints completely without being noticeably odd. This is one of the main reasons why most of us are able to distinguish a personal letter from a business letter, an advertisement from a promotional letter or a newspaper editorial from a news report. Any mismatch in the use of generic resources is noticed as odd not only by the members of the specialist community, but also by the good users of the language in general. It may be the result of the use of some specific lexico-grammatical resources, certain kinds of meanings associated with specific genres, the positioning of certain rhetorical elements or even special meanings realized through certain expressions typically associated with only a restricted number of genres.

Swales (1990:204) cites an excellent example of this from the case study of Salwa, an Egyptian doctoral student in fish biology. In his draft of a research article introduction, Salwa begins like this:

[1] In aquaculture, the relations among nutrients, stocking rate, water quality and weather are complex . . .

The major problem with this opening, Swales comments, is that it has 'an explanatory textbook quality about it' and hence is 'unlikely to go down well with the expert readers of a specialized journal'. The remedy, he suggests, was to 'switch the proposition from new

information to old information, from foreground to background', by inserting 'are known to be', so that we get the following perfectly acceptable opening:

[2] In aquaculture, the relations among nutrients, stocking rate, water quality and weather are known to be complex . . .

Although it is not always possible to find an exact correlation between the form of linguistic resources (be they lexico-grammatical or discoursal) and the functional values they assume in discourse, one is likely to find a much closer relationship between them within a genre than any other concept accounting for linguistic variation. Restrictions are also seen to operate on the intent, positioning and internal structure of the genre within a particular professional or academic context. This, perhaps, is another reason why most members of a particular professional or academic community are more likely than others to structure a particular genre more or less the same way.

Fourth, *these constraints are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s).* It is often found that the members of the professional or academic community have greater knowledge of the conventional purpose(s), construction and use of specific genres than those who are non-specialists. That is why expert genre writers often appear to be more creative in the use of genres they are most familiar with than those who are outside the specialist community. Obviously, one needs to be familiar with the conventions of the genre before one can exploit them for special effects. Experienced newspaper reporters often succeed in imposing desired perspectives on otherwise objective news reports. Similarly, in the case of counsel-witness examination in the court of law, the counsel's private intention to win the case often takes precedence over the real communicative purpose of cross-examination, i.e., bringing facts of the case to the attention of the court. For non-specialists, including a majority of discourse analysts, this lack of knowledge often presents serious difficulties, not only in the interpretation of the genre-content but also in the validation of analytical findings. It is for this reason that, in many of the studies of discourse analysis, including genre analysis, it has become almost a standard procedure to involve a specialist informant or to seek his or her reactions on various aspects of the investigation.

Although this definition of professional and academic genres owes its debt to Swales's work (1981, 1985, 1990), it differs from it in the

way it brings in the psychological, particularly cognitive, level of genre construction. Swales offers a good fusion of linguistic and sociological factors in his definition of a genre; however, he underplays psychological factors, thus undermining the importance of tactical aspects of genre construction, which play a significant role in the concept of genre as a dynamic social process, as against a static one.

To sum up, each genre is an instance of a successful achievement of a specific communicative purpose using conventionalized knowledge of linguistic and discoursal resources. Since each genre, in certain important respects, structures the narrow world of experience or reality in a particular way, the implication is that the same experience or reality will require a different way of structuring, if one were to operate in a different genre. Although, as pointed out in the preceding paragraph, it is true that many professional writers do manage to exploit genre constraints to achieve effectiveness and originality in their writing, most of them still operate well within a broad range of generic rules and conventions. From the point of view of applied genre analysis, our primary concern is twofold: first, to characterize typical or conventional textual features of any genre-specific text in an attempt to identify pedagogically utilizable form-function correlations; and second, to explain such a characterization in the context of the socio-cultural as well as the cognitive constraints operating in the relevant area of specialization, whether professional or academic.

2.2 Function of orientation

Discourse analysis, of which applied genre analysis is a recent but very significant development, is a multidisciplinary activity to which a number of researchers from a variety of disciplines in the last quarter of a century have been drawn. Whereas interest in the analysis of linguistic variation is common to all of them, their training and background knowledge have encouraged them to formulate issues differently, adopt different methodologies and find answers that seem most interesting to them. While each one of them has a valid contribution to make, we need a fair amount of cross-fertilization in order to have a balanced approach to the construction and understanding of various genres. From the point of view of the analysis of functional variation in language, one envisages at least three different kinds of orientation, depending upon the nature of

background knowledge and the motivating purpose the researcher brings to genre analysis.

2.2.1 *Linguistics and genre analysis*

As one more closely associated with linguistics, I would like to begin with a predominantly linguistic orientation. Much of what has come to be regarded as some form of register or stylistic analysis, and more recently certain types of discourse analysis, has been mainly concerned with a linguistic description of various texts. The analysts in most of these studies have generally been quite excited about an above-average incidence or even a lack of certain linguistic features, be they lexical, grammatical or even discoursal/rhetorical, in the texts under study. Earlier work on register analysis (see Barber, 1962; Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens, 1964; Huddleston, 1971; Gopnik, 1972, etc., on scientific English; Gustafsson, 1975, on legal English; and Crystal and Davy, 1969, on stylistic analysis of a number of varieties of English) belong to this category.

Later work in linguistic analysis on textualization and the use of rhetorical devices (Selinker, Lackstrom and Trimble, 1972, 1974; Swales, 1974; etc.) and rhetorical and discourse organization (Widdowson, 1973; Candlin et al., 1974, 1976 and 1980; Tadros, 1981; Hoey, 1983; Swales, 1981b; Bhatia, 1982 etc.) mark not only a movement from old to new but also from general to specific. This gradual progression in language description from one level to another appears to form a series of chinese boxes, each fitting into the other. Most of these studies are of great importance in linguistics because they tend to associate certain specific features of language with certain types of writing or styles. However, very few of them distinguished a variety (or register) from a genre. For many of them, a science research article, for example, is as legitimate an instance of scientific English as is an extract from a chemistry lab report. This creates two types of problem. Firstly, it potentially misrepresents not only the communicative purposes of the two genres, but also the relationship between the participants taking part in the linguistic activity, thus obscuring the very communicative nature as well as the distinct characteristics of the two genres. Secondly, by implication it gives a grossly misleading impression that a research article in science is likely to be very different from a research article in sociology, linguistics or psychology, for example. Swales (1981b), on the basis of

his analysis of some forty-eight research article introductions from a variety of fourteen journals ranging from molecular physics through electronics, chemical engineering, neurology, radiology, educational research, educational psychology, management, language and linguistics, gives overwhelming evidence of the fact that a research article introduction in science is as good an example of this genre as is the one from psychology or sociology. Analyses of varieties or registers on their own reveal very little about the true nature of genres and about the way social purposes are accomplished in and through them in settings in which they are used. A number of significant questions like *Is this true of all the genres in a particular variety? How do these linguistic features realize social realities in a particular field of study or profession? Why do the users of the genre use these features and not others? Does the use of these features represent specific conventions in a particular genre, and if they do, what happens if some practitioners take liberties with these conventions?* remain largely unanswered.

2.2.2 *Sociology and genre analysis*

The second type of orientation is more of sociological concern, which makes it possible for the analyst to understand how a particular genre defines, organizes and finally communicates social reality. This aspect of genre analysis emphasizes that text by itself is not a complete object possessing meaning on its own; it is to be regarded as an ongoing process of negotiation in the context of issues like social roles, group purposes, professional and organizational preferences and prerequisites, and even cultural constraints. An exhaustive knowledge of sociological as well as cultural context provides one of the most important contributions to what Geertz (1973) refers to as a thick description of any social reality, including the linguistic behaviour of any speech community, academic or professional. Carolyn Miller (1984), taking primarily an ethnomethodological perspective, also underlines the importance of sociolinguistic input when she considers genre as social action. Kress (1985:19) too seems to separate linguistic factors from the sociolinguistic ones when he says:

> The social occasions of which texts are a part have fundamentally important effect on texts. The characteristic features and structures of those situations, the purposes of the participants, the goals of the participants all have their effects on the form of texts which are constructed in those situations. The situations are always conventional. That is, the occasions in which we interact, the social relations which we contract, are conventionalised and structured, more or less thoroughly, depending on the kind of situation it is. They range from entirely formulaic and ritualised occasions, such as royal weddings, sporting encounters, committee meetings, to family rituals such as breakfast or barbecues or fights over who is to do the dishes. Other, probably fewer occasions are less ritualised, less formulaic; casual conversations may be an example. The structures and forms of the conventionalised occasions themselves signify the functions, the purposes of the participants, and the desired goals of that occasion.

At the time of writing, sociological studies of language use exist as a separate tradition of enquiry with hardly any overlap with the linguistic studies of similar genres. Research in scientific genres from these two traditions, for instance, has dealt with remarkably similar topics but rarely shows any awareness of studies done by various scholars in the two areas. Bazerman (1983) has an impressive list of over 140 references related to topics on scientific writing but very few of them familiar to (applied) linguists or ESP practitioners and I am sure the same is true the other way round. It is, therefore, necessary to point out that the two traditions have a lot to gain from each other. Sociological studies can become more alert to the use of linguistic resources for social ends whereas linguists can add the much needed sociological explanation to their interpretation of the use of language in professional and academic contexts.

The sociological aspect of genre analysis focuses on the conventional and often standardized features of genre construction and offers relevant, though non-linguistic, answers to the oft-repeated question *Why do members of what sociologists call 'secondary cultures' write the way they do?*

2.2.3 *Psychology and genre analysis*

The third type of orientation is basically psycholinguistic in nature, where the investigator tends to pay more attention to the tactical aspects of genre construction. The psycholinguistic aspect of genre analysis reveals the cognitive structuring, typical of particular areas of enquiry, whereas the tactical aspect of genre description highlights the individual strategic choices made by the writer in order to execute his or her intention. These tactical choices, appropriately called **strategies**,

exploited by a particular writer are generally used in order to make the writing more effective, keeping in mind any special reader requirements, considerations arising from a different use of medium or pre-requisites or constraints imposed by organizational and other factors of this kind. Such strategies are generally non-discriminative, in the sense that they do not change the essential communicative purpose of the genre. Non-discriminative strategies are concerned with the exploitation of the conventional rules of the genre concerned for the purpose of greater effectiveness in a very specific socio-cultural context, originality or very special reader considerations. Take, for example, the case of newspaper reports, which are generally recognized as a fairly well-established genre, with their own characteristic features, both linguistic and sociolinguistic. They serve a set of specific communicative purposes within newspapers. The reporters as well as the readers of newspapers have a common understanding of the function of this genre, in that a good reporter is generally well aware of what is expected of his news reporting, and the readers also have a fairly good understanding of the social function of the genre, i.e., to inform the readers about the day-to-day happenings in the world around them without bringing in any subjective interpretation or unnecessary bias. However, there are several types of non-discriminative linguistic strategies that reporters legitimately use to accomplish their intention in a particular news report. First, reporters use typical linguistic strategies in order to create various perspectives on news reports, thus bringing in some degree of subjective interpretation or even bias in their reporting. These may range from a convenient selection of facts to a subtle use of vocabulary. A news report in the *Guardian*, for example, is not written the same way as one in any of the tabloids, for example the *Sun*. Although both will be characterized as news reports, the one in the tabloid will be less detailed, and will generally have a more sensational headline, as well as a lot of visual input in order to ensure popular appeal. Many of these differences can be explained by reference to factors such as the purpose and nature of the newspaper and the nature of the readership. In addition to these strategies, newspaper reporters in various establishments are often required to follow guidelines imposed by the organization in which they work. These organizational constraints and pre-requisites are also generally of non-discriminative kind, in that they rarely change the nature of the genre within which a particular text is written.

Sometimes strategies used in the two texts representing the same genre differ because of the different nature of the medium involved. The case of print and TV advertisements is a good example of this

phenomenon. Product description in the two advertisement-types is handled very differently because of the use of visuals on the TV.

Discriminative strategies, on the other hand, tend to vary the nature of the genre significantly, often introducing new or additional considerations in the communicative purpose of the text. This variation sometimes helps one to distinguish genres from sub-genres within them. A survey article, a review article, a state-of-the-art article, for example, can be distinguished as sub-genres of what is popularly known as the research article. Similarly, sports reporting is becoming increasingly different from general news reporting because of the greater use of popular explanation in reporting sporting events. The two text-types have a lot in common and yet they appear to use significantly different strategies to report objectively on two different types of events. In a case like this, it is best to regard them as two sub-genres of the same genre. However, it must be admitted that it seems almost impossible to draw up clearly defined criteria to make a satisfactory distinction between genres and sub-genres.

The communicative purpose is inevitably reflected in the interpretative cognitive structuring of the genre, which, in a way, represents the typical regularities of organization in it. These regularities must be seen as cognitive in nature because they reflect the strategies that members of a particular discourse or professional community typically use in the construction and understanding of that genre to achieve specific communicative purposes. This cognitive structuring reflects accumulated and conventionalized social knowledge available to a particular discourse or professional community. In this sense it is different from the organization of presupposed knowledge in an individual, which is primarily the case in schema theory, frames or scripts (Schank and Abelson, 1977). A good illustration of this inevitable connection between the communicative purpose of a particular genre and its typical cognitive structuring can be found in a comparison of the interpretative cognitive structures that one may discover in a typical news report and a feature article in a newspaper. In spite of all the other factors relating to the mode (including channel and nature of participation) and tenor of discourse (including the status and social distance between the participants) remaining the same, their communicative purposes change from an objective reporting in the news report to a balanced analysis of some interesting and controversial issue in the feature article. These differences in communicative goals require rather different strategies to be used in the two genres, and are reflected in the cognitive structuring of the two genres. In cases like these, where the communicative purposes of the

genre-text are considerably different, requiring very different cognitive structuring, the two texts are viewed as different genres.

2.3 Analysing unfamiliar genres

In order to undertake a comprehensive investigation of any genre, one needs to consider some or all of the following seven steps, depending upon the purpose of the analysis, the aspect of the genre that one intends to focus on, and the background knowledge one already has of the nature of the genre in question.

1. Placing the given genre-text in a situational context

First, one needs to place the genre-text (i.e., a typical representative example of the genre) intuitively in a situational context by looking at one's prior experience, the internal clues in the text and the encyclopaedic knowledge of the world that one already has. This will include the writer's previous experience and background knowledge of the specialist discipline as well as that of the communicative conventions typically associated with it. The background knowledge of the discipline one gets from his/her association with, and training within, the professional community, whereas the knowledge of the communicative conventions one gets from his/her prior experience of similar texts. The user, therefore, gets the explanation of why the genre is conventionally written the way it is, from his or her understanding of the procedures used in the area of activity to which the genre belongs. This kind of knowledge is greater in those people who professionally belong to the speech community which habitually makes use of that genre.

For people who do not belong to the relevant speech community, this kind of knowledge is usually acquired by surveying available literature.

2. Surveying existing literature

This will include, among other things, literature on:

linguistic analyses of the genre/variety in question or other related or similar genres/varieties;

tools, methods or theories of linguistic/discourse/genre analysis which might be relevant to this situation;

practitioner advice, guide books, manuals etc. relevant to the speech community in question;

discussions of the social structure, interactions, history, beliefs, goals etc., of the professional or academic community which uses the genre in question.

3. Refining the situational/contextual analysis

Having intuitively placed the text roughly in a situational/contextual framework, one needs to refine such an analysis further by:

defining the speaker/writer of the text, the audience, their relationship and their goals;

defining the historical, socio-cultural, philosophic and/or occupational placement of the community in which the discourse takes place;

identifying the network of surrounding texts and linguistic traditions that form the background to this particular genre-text;

identifying the topic/subject/extra-textual reality which the text is trying to represent, change or use and the relationship of the text to that reality.

4. Selecting corpus

In order to select the right kind and size of corpus one needs to:

define the genre/sub-genre that one is working with well enough so that it may be distinguishable from other genres either similar or closely related in some ways. The definition may be based on the communicative purposes, the situational context(s) in which it is generally used, and some distinctive textual characteristics of the genre-text or some combination of these;

make sure that one's criteria for deciding whether a text belongs to a specific genre/variety are clearly stated;

decide on one's criteria for an adequate selection of the corpus for one's specific purpose(s) – a long single typical text for detailed analysis, a few randomly chosen texts for exploratory investigation, a large statistical sample to investigate a few specified features through easily identified indicators.

5. Studying the institutional context

A good genre analyst next attempts to study the institutional context, including the system and/or methodology, in which the genre is used and the rules and conventions (linguistic, social, cultural, academic, professional) that govern the use of language in such institutional settings. These rules and conventions are most often implicitly understood and unconsciously followed by the participants in that communicative situation in which the genre in question is used – or even explicitly enforced in some institutional settings (i.e., cross-examination in the law court). Quite a bit of information on these aspects of institutional contexts is available from guide books, manuals, practitioner advice and discussions of the social structure, interactions, history, beliefs, goals of the community in published or otherwise available literature. This step may also include the study of the organizational context, if that is seen to have influenced the genre construction in any way. This becomes particularly important if the data is collected from a particular organization, which often imposes its own organizational constraints and pre-requisites for genre construction.

6. Levels of linguistic analysis

The genre analyst then decides at which level(s) the most distinctive or significant features of language (for his/her motivating problem) occur, and carries out the appropriate analysis, which may concentrate on one or more of the following three levels of linguistic realization:

Level 1: Analysis of lexico-grammatical features

A text can be analysed quantitatively by studying the specific features of language that are predominantly used in the variety to which the

text belongs. This is generally done by undertaking a large-scale corpus-based statistical analysis of a representative sample of the variety in question. Barber (1962), for example, undertook such a study of Some Measurable Characteristics of Modern Scientific Prose, and revealed the following figures of statistical significance in respect of the use of various tenses in the corpus.

Use of tenses in scientific English

	Active	Passive
Present simple	64%	25%
Present progressive	0.6%	0%
Present perfect	1.7%	1.4%
Past simple	1.2%	1.2%
Future simple	3.7%	0.7%
Imperative	1.3%	

Similar findings regarding the incidence of certain types of dependent clauses are reported in Gustafsson (1975) in the context of legislative genre which she calls English Law Language.

that-clauses	= 10%
adverbial clauses	= 31%
comparative clauses	= 11%
relative clauses	= 47%

Linguistic analyses of frequency of syntactic properties in different genres are interesting and useful in the sense that they provide necessary empirical evidence to confirm or disprove some of the intuitive and impressionistic statements that we all tend to make about the high or low incidence of certain lexico-grammatical features of various genres. However, this level of linguistic analysis tells us very little about what aspects of these genres are textualized (*pace* Widdowson, 1979) and to what purpose. The findings remain severely constrained by their emphasis on surface features and do not provide adequate information about the way communicative purpose is accomplished in a particular genre.

Focusing specifically on stylistic variation rather than on the frequency of certain lexico-grammatical features of a number of

varieties of English, Crystal and Davy (1969) have added a useful dimension to text analysis under the name of stylistic analysis. They draw some interesting conclusions about stylistic variation in a number of varieties of language use, for example, on the legislative documents:

> It is a characteristic legal habit to conflate, by means of an array of subordinating devices, sections of language which would elsewhere be much more likely to appear as separate sentences.
>
> Legal English contains only complete major sentences. . . . Most of these complete sentences are in the form of statements, with no questions, and only an occasional command.
>
> One of the most striking characteristics of written Legal English is that it is highly nominal.

Although, as Bhatia (1982:20) points out, these are perceptive observations about the surface features of legislative genre, they fall short of offering an explanation of why legislative language takes the form it does, and it is reasonable to suppose that many of the applied linguistic purposes, particularly ESP, will be more effectively served if the findings are informed by insights into the rationale underlying selection and distribution of surface linguistic features.

Level 2: Analysis of text-patterning or textualization

This aspect of linguistic analysis highlights the tactical aspect of conventional language use, specifying the way members of a particular speech community assign restricted values to various aspects of language use (they may be features of lexis, syntax or even discourse) when operating in a particular genre. Widdowson (1979) calls this aspect of text analysis textualization.

An excellent example of this level of analysis comes from a very early analysis of data from chemistry textbooks by Swales (1974), where he was studying the function of past-participles in the pre- and post-modifying NP positions. Pre-modifying en-participles, he found, textualize two different aspects of chemistry text depending upon whether the author was exemplifying or generalizing. Since attribution, he claims, is an important convention in science, in a case where the author is exemplifying, the function of an -en participle is to signal

unmistakably that the convention is being suspended, as in the following sentence.

> [3] A *given* bottle contains a compound which upon analysis is shown to contain 0.600 gram-atom of phosphorous and 1.500 gram-atom of oxygen.

This, he claims, helps the author to prevent unnecessary and irrelevant enquiries regarding the details of the experiment. In the case of *generalizing*, Swales maintains, the function of *a given* is that of crypto-determiner which very precisely indicates the concept of definiteness without commitment to specificity, as in the following example.

> [4] Figure 9.5 shows how the vapour pressure of *a given* substance varies with temperature.

If one were to substitute *a certain* instead of *a given* in the above example, he claims, the reading would become insufficiently generalized, as in the following case.

> [5] Figure 9.5 shows how the vapour pressure of *a certain* substance varies with temperature.

On the other hand, if one were to substitute another ordinary English determiner like *any*, the reading would become overgeneralized, as in the following case.

> [6] Figure 9.5 shows how the vapour pressure of *any* substance varies with temperature.

The above example indicates that statistical significance of a particular linguistic feature in a specific genre, by itself, is less interesting. However, it becomes more significant if it is possible to say what aspect of the genre it textualizes. This kind of insight into text-patterning in various genres tends to provide exciting answers to the question *Why do members of what sociologists call 'secondary cultures' write the way they do?* thus taking linguistic description a step further in the direction of explanation.

However, just as it is possible for a particular syntactic feature to

perform several functions specific to a particular genre, similarly, it is also possible for a particular feature of language to perform different functions in different genres. A good example of that will be the use of NPs and nominalizations in advertising, legislation and scientific research articles.

In certain types of advertisements we find an overwhelming use of NPs. What purpose do they serve in the text? What aspect of the genre do they textualize? We all know that one of the most essential and typical strategies that advertisers use is the positive description of the product. The most useful linguistic feature for that purpose is the adjective. And, in order to be able to use as many adjectives as possible advertisers have no option but to use a number of NPs, because this syntactic category is likely to provide more slots for adjectival insertions than any other. So, in certain types of advertisements, NPs are used as facilitators, as it were, for positive product descriptions.

In scientific research writing, (compound) nominal phrases have an above-average incidence (Huckin and Olsen, 1983; Salager, 1984; Williams, 1984). Huckin and Olsen (1983) rightly point out that the use of these NPs promotes concise referencing and discourse cohesion and coherence. In fact, they serve as *ad hoc* names for concepts that will be referred to again, thus avoiding long descriptions. Dubois (1981), in a very interesting paper, goes a step further and suggests that various elements of NPs are generally rearranged to construct new NPs and that the choice between the two is not stylistic, but determined by the writer's assumptions concerning shared information on the part of his readers. She illustrates this by taking the following example:

[7] Studies of the oxidative NADP in enzymes in Drosophilla melanogaster have concentrated on the relationship of gene dosage to the in vitro tissue enzyme level and on allelozyme variation.

It is possible to rearrange the first NP in the above example in the form of a more complex nominal by changing post-modification phrases into a more concise pre-modification:

[8] Drosophilla melanogaster oxidative NADP-enzyme studies have concentrated on the gene dosage to in vitro tissue enzyme level relationship.

Dubois (1981) points out that although [8] is more concise, densely packed and hence space-saving than [7], it is less likely to occur in the

beginning of an article, because, in that case, the author will be assuming a lot of information on the part of his readers right in the beginning of the article. It appears, therefore, that the scientific writer's use of complex NPs is not static but a dynamic one. He creates new nominals as he goes on building up new information for his readers.

In the case of legislative writing several studies have emphasized its nominal character (Crystal and Davy, 1969; Gustafsson, 1975; Bhatia, 1982; Swales and Bhatia, 1983). Let us take a simple but typical example from Bhatia and Swales (1983).

[9] The power to make regulations under this section shall be exercisable by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of either House of Parliament.

Now, compare this extract from Chapter 25/78: Nuclear Safeguards and Electricity [Finance Act] 1978, UK with its more verbal version given below.

[10] A statutory instrument can be used to make regulations under this section and such a statutory instrument can be annulled if either House of Parliament passes a resolution to that effect.

One can recognize [10] as similar to ordinary English writing, whereas [9] appears to be somewhat unnecessarily dense and self-contained.

Analysis of textual-patterning adds interesting explanation to the analysis of lexico-grammar of a genre. Such information on form-function correlations can be extremely useful for a number of applied linguistic purposes, particularly the teaching of ESP, which we shall take up in Part 3.

Level 3: Structural interpretation of the text-genre

As discussed in Section 2.2.3, structural interpretation of the text-genre highlights the cognitive aspects of language organization. Specialist writers seem to be fairly consistent in the way they organize their overall message in a particular genre, and analysis of structural organization of the genre reveals preferred ways of communicating intention in specific areas of inquiry. Swales (1981b) discovered that writers of academic research papers displayed remarkable similarities

in the way they organized their article introductions. On the basis of some forty-eight article introductions from a variety of subject disciplines, ranging from physical and biological sciences to social sciences and linguistics, he posited a four-move structure for a typical article introduction, which he, in his later publication (1990), called Research Space Model for Article Introductions. Let us take a typical example of this kind of organization from his (1981) monograph.

> [11] (1) The thermal properties of glassy materials at low temperatures are still not completely understood. (2) The thermal conductivity has a plateau which is usually in the range of 5 to 10K and below this temperature it has a temperature dependence which varies approximately at T2. (3) The specific heat below 4K is much larger than that which would be expected from the Dabye theory and it has an additional term which is proportional to T. (4) Some progress has been made towards understanding the thermal behaviour by assuming that there is a cut-off in the phonon spectrum at high frequencies (Zaitlin and Anderson 1975 a,b) and that there is an additional system of low-lying two level states (Anderson et al, 1972, Phillips, 1972). (5) Nevertheless more experimental data are required and in particular it would seem desirable to make experiments on glassy samples whose properties can be varied slightly from one to the other. (6) The present investigation reports attempts to do this by using various samples of the same epoxy resin which have been subjected to different curing cycles. (7) Measurements of the specific heat (or the diffusivity) and the thermal conductivity have been taken in the temperature range 0.1 to 80K for a set of specimens which covered up to nine different curing cycles.
>
> [Kelham and Rosenberg, 1981:1737]

Swales (1981b) assigns a typical four-move cognitive structure to the above text as follows. (Sentences have been numbered for ease of reference.)

Move 1: **Establishing the research field** (1–3)
Move 2: **Summarizing previous research** (4)
Move 3: **Preparing for present research** (5)
Move 4: **Introducing the present research** (6–7)

The communicative purpose of the article introduction is accomplished through four rhetorical moves, which give this genre its typical cognitive structure. Just as each genre has a communicative purpose that it tends to serve, similarly, each move also serves a typical communicative intention which is always subservient to the overall communicative purpose of the genre. In order to realize a particular communicative intention at the level of a move, an individual writer may use different rhetorical strategies. In the case of article

introduction the writer may decide to **establish the research field** either by

(a) asserting centrality of the topic, or
(b) stating current knowledge, or
(c) ascribing key characteristics

depending upon the constraints like the nature of the topic/field, the background knowledge of the intended readership, reader-writer relationship etc. In the above text, for example, the writer decides to use option (b). These strategies, as pointed out in Section 2.2, are essentially of non-discriminative type and in principle, one can add to the list of strategies one wishes to use at this level by being innovative.

Similarly, move 2 can be realized by using any one or a combination of the following three strategies:

(a) using a strong author-orientation and/or
(b) using a weak author orientation and/or
(c) using a subject orientation.

In [11] the author chooses to use a combination of (b) and (c). In the case of move 3, Swales (1981b) points out the author has a choice of three:

(a) by indicating a gap (in previous research) or
(b) by question-raising (about previous research) or
(c) by extending a finding.

In the example above the authors create research space for their own work by indicating a gap in the previous research. Similarly, move 4 can be realized by either of the following options:

(a) by stating the purpose of present research
(b) by outlining the present research.

In [11], we find the use of the second strategy to introduce present research. Although Swales in a number of his publications (1981, 1986, 1990) offers various versions of the interpretative **move-structure** for this research genre, he has never clarified the use of

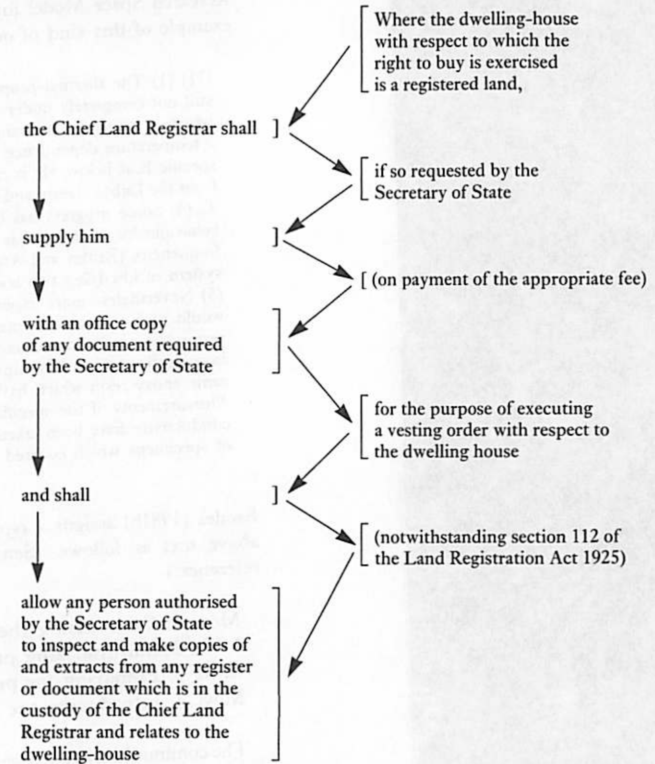
these non-discriminative strategies for an effective and successful accomplishment of the communicative purpose of the genre at various levels. I will say more on this aspect of genre analysis in later sections of the book when I take up other genres. For the time being, it is useful to think of moves as discriminative elements of generic structure and strategies as non-discriminative options within the *allowable contributions* available to an author for creative or innovative genre construction.

It is important to remember that although the notion of cognitive move-structure outlined here can be widely used for a variety of genres, it may not always be applicable to all of them. The idea is to interpret the regularities of organization in order to understand the rationale for the genre. Cognitive structuring, in a way, is very much like schematic structuring in schema theory, except that in the former, it is the conventionalized and standardized organization used by almost all the members of the professional community, whereas in the latter, it is often a reader's individual response to the text in question. Cognitive structuring in a genre is the property of the genre as such and not that of the individual reader. It depends upon the communicative purpose(s) that it serves in the genre and that is why it varies from one genre to another. In legislative genre, for example, the cognitive structuring displays a characteristic interplay of the main provisionary clause and the qualifications inserted at various syntactic openings within the structure of a sentence (Bhatia, 1982). In order to give some substance to this, let me take a very typical example of this from the British Housing Act 1980.

> [12] Where the dwelling-house with respect to which the right to buy is exercised is a registered land, the Chief Land Registrar shall, if so requested by the Secretary of State, supply him (on payment of the appropriate fee) with an office copy of any document required by the Secretary of State for the purpose of executing a vesting order with respect to the dwelling-house and shall (nothwithstanding section 112 of the Land Registration Act 1925) allow any person authorised by the Secretary of State to inspect and make copies of and extracts from any register or document which is in the custody of the Chief Land Registrar and relates to the dwelling-house.
>
> (Section 24, subsection 5)

The example above gives not only a clear indication of the complexity of individual qualification insertions in the legislative genre but also some indication of the variety of such qualifications. The following version of the same text displays more explicitly the structural organization of the genre.

Interactive move-structure in legislative writing



Both the density and the complexity of qualificational insertions serve a typically legal function in this genre in that each one is meant to answer legal questions and doubts, and offer clarifications about various aspects of the main provision. Any adequate structural description of the genre should explain this phenomenon. Therefore, it is more appropriate to think in terms of a two-part interactive cognitive structure consisting of the main provisionary clause, Legislating

provisions, and the qualifications, Specifying conditions, rather than the linear organization of the moves as found in the case of the research article introductions. The analysis of cognitive structuring is interactive here in the sense that the Specifying conditions typically interact with several aspects of the Legislating provision at various positions, answering a number of questions that can be legitimately asked in the context. The main function of these inserted qualifications or conditions is to make the legislative provision precise, clear, unambiguous and all-inclusive (see Bhatia 1982, 1987a). We shall have more on this aspect of interactive cognitive structuring when we take up the cases of various legal genres in Part 2 of the book.

7. Specialist information in genre analysis

Finally, the analyst double checks his findings against reactions from a specialist informant, who, generally, is a practising member of the disciplinary culture in which the genre is routinely used. The specialist reaction confirms his findings, brings validity to his insights and adds psychological reality to his analysis. It is an important aspect of genre analysis, if one wishes to bring in relevant explanation rather than mere description in one's analysis.

In existing literature (Selinker, 1979; Tarone et al, 1981; Bhatia, 1982; Huckin and Olsen, 1984) there is good account of the problem faced by discourse/genre analysts and teachers of ESL/ESP. Selinker (1979) describes their predicament as follows:

> What are we to do as ESL teachers in the normal situation where we ourselves just do not understand the English language scientific textbooks and professional articles which our students are required to grapple with?
>
> (Selinker, 1979:190)

To address this problem, Selinker (1979) and some of his colleagues used a specialist genetics professor to help them interpret a journal article in genetics. They discovered that their meetings with the specialist informant were very useful and productive. They not only received quite a lot of help in understanding the nature of the text but were also able to establish somewhat tentative procedures to exploit specialist reactions in discourse interpretation. Huckin and Olsen (1984) did further work on the same problem using the author of the same genetics article which Selinker used with a genetics professor as

a specialist informant. Both these studies, although they came up with slightly different interpretations of the target text, were very useful in clarifying some of the crucial issues often raised in the context of the use of specialist informants in discourse interpretation. Huckin and Olsen (1984) list their main conclusions as follows:

> 1. LSP researchers who use informants should have some familiarity with important conventions and ways of arguing in the field being studied – in this case, an understanding of scientific methodology and of the transitory nature of the results in a rapidly-progressing scientific field;
> 2. no specialist informant is likely to provide an optimally useful interpretation of a text for pedagogical purposes unless the LSP researcher can learn to see the information structure of the text more through the eyes of the specialist informant and less through the eyes of the linguist;
> 3. perhaps the most useful specialist informant one can find for an LSP text is the actual author of that text.
>
> (Huckin and Olsen, 1984:129)

Tarone et al. (1981) went a step further and used the services of a subject-specialist as part of the investigating team for their analysis of astro-physics journal articles. The most extensive use of the specialist informant is reported in Bhatia (1982), where the investigator worked closely over a period of almost three years with a senior Parliamentary Counsel who was primarily responsible for the drafting of the British Housing Act 1980, which he used as corpus for his doctoral investigation. Consulting a specialist informant in genre analysis is a difficult job. In the first place, it is difficult to find a truly resourceful specialist informant. Secondly, even if one succeeds in finding a suitable person, it takes quite an effort, time and understanding to develop a common understanding of the purpose of enquiry. It is not always easy to ensure that the two parties, with their differing background knowledge, are able to speak the same language, as it were. In order to avoid any mishaps in the selection of an appropriate specialist informant for the analysis of a particular genre, Selinker (1979) mentions several characteristics that one should look for but it is possible to adapt the following three which appear to be crucial. The specialist informant, as far as possible, should

1. Be a competent and trained specialist member of the disciplinary culture in which the genre under study is routinely used.
2. Have a feel for the specialist language and also be prepared to

talk about it openly, when asked searching questions about various aspects of the genre under study.

3. Be in a position to explain clearly what he believes expert members of the disciplinary culture do when they exploit language in order to accomplish their generic goals.

In order to ensure maximum co-operation from the specialist informant and to exploit his/her expertise adequately, the investigator needs to keep the following in mind:

1. The investigator must have a good idea of what he is looking for, preferably in terms of possible hypotheses formulated on the basis of initial analyses of the data representing the genre in question.
2. The investigator should formulate his/her questions in a manner which is least-biasing, although narrowly focused specific questions are sometimes very useful to prevent the discussion from going out of control.
3. The investigator should be prepared to refine and reframe questions, keeping in mind the new information or interpretations offered by the specialist informant.
4. The discussion sessions with the specialist informant should be recorded as far as possible, transcribed and sent back to the informant for confirmation. Sometimes, the informant can be surprised at his own contribution and might want to change or clarify his opinion or assertion.
5. Sometimes it can be extremely useful to consult a second informant to validate some or all of the data from the first one.

These are just a few of the guidelines that can help the analyst to plan and organize discussion sessions with the specialist informant.

2.4 Cross-cultural factors in genre analysis

The relationship between linguistic communication and culture is widely recognized. Saville-Troike (1982:34) goes a step further to suggest that *the very concept of the evolution of culture is dependent on the capacity of humans to use language for purposes of organizing social cooperation.* Unfortunately, however, as Candlin (1978) points out, much of the available research in discourse interpretation *operates*

within a specific cultural and ethnographic frame; 'general principles of human cooperative behaviour' seem Western European, even Anglo-Saxon in their orientation. In recent years researchers in ethnography and ethnomethodology have gone a long way towards producing a theory of conversation as a co-operative activity based on social rules of interaction. However, few of these studies consider norms other than pan-cultural from the West.

Cross-cultural variation in spoken interaction has become a well-established area of discourse study but very little has been published in the case of written genres, though recently there have been some indications of interest in cross-cultural variation in academic and professional discourse. It has been well known for some time that various cultures organize and develop ideas differently when writing expository texts and these differences persist when users of these languages and cultures learn to write in a new language. In a recent study, Hinds (1990:98), investigating expository writing in Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Thai, discovered that in all these languages there is a common style which is characterized by 'delayed introduction of purpose'. This delayed introduction of purpose, he claims, has the undesirable effect of making the essay appear incoherent to the English-speaking reader, although the style does not have this effect on the native speaker. Others (Hinds, 1990; Clyne, 1981; Kaplan, 1983; Connor and McCagg, 1984; Cheng, 1985) have also come up with similar findings in the case of expository and argumentative prose. However, the situation is somewhat less than satisfactory in the area of professional and academic genres. There are two obvious reasons for the lack of research in this area. First, non-literary genre analysis has so far been more actively concerned with some of the well-established and more standardized genres, particularly those used in research settings. In research writing, the trend is still towards conformity because a majority of academics look for recognition through publications in the English-speaking world, where established conventions and standards are observed rather seriously by scientists and other academics in various disciplines. However, in the case of many other professional genres, particularly in some of the business letters (Teh Geok Suan, 1986; Bhatia and Tay, 1987), job applications (Bhatia, 1989) and some legal genres, the local socio-cultural constraints do seem to play a more significant role in their linguistic realizations. In a number of ESP situations where such genres are used, it therefore appears appropriate that genre analysts become aware of the local constraints which may seem to determine the nature and linguistic realizations of these genres in order to ensure pragmatic

success in real life professional settings in local environments. At the moment, there is very little research in this area and a lot more input is needed to make sure that the findings of genre analysis, wherever necessary, are sensitive to local socio-cultural constraints.

In a majority of genres, particularly those with which we are concerned in this book, local cultural constraints are unlikely to effect substantially the essential move-structure of a specific genre; however it is very likely that they will have significantly interesting implications for the realization of certain moves and even in the way certain non-discriminative strategies are employed to accomplish specific intentions. These constraints are particularly important for genres employed in business transactions than anywhere else. Cultural taboos in the use of numbers, colours and shapes are well known. Aman (1982) has a number of interesting and useful suggestions for advertisers. One would do well in India to avoid zero and any number ending in zero. The number seven should be shunned in Ghana, Kenya and Singapore. About number 88, he reports:

> The number 88 recently has taken on offensive connotations in England. A British paramilitary terror group calls itself 'column 88'. The number 88 is derived from the eighth letter of the alphabet, 'H', and, in the minds of its users, is equivalent of HH, standing for the Nazi salute 'Heil Hitler'. It is unlikely that many English Jews who also know the meaning of 88 would be inclined to purchase a product containing the number 88, such as the Oldsmobile Delta 88.

Hawkins (1983) reports an interesting story about a US manufacturer of high-tech equipment, who was abruptly tossed out of the Middle East market, not because it had anything to do with the quality of his product, price or business expertise, but simply because he failed to understand the cultural baggage of his local partner. National culture, that elusive combination of customs, skills, art and ideas that distinguish each country, he points out, has always been a factor in international projects. As the business world is getting smaller and smaller every day, the trend towards increased cross-cultural understanding is likely to assume greater significance. The USA, he reports, is a 'low context' culture whereas Japan and China are 'high context' cultures. In 'low context' cultures, verbal messages are important, meaning and understanding come from what is said, relationships are often limited, and change is made easily and rapidly. In the 'high context' cultures, on the other hand, meaning and understanding come from looking at the position of the person in a company or the relationship between the business persons. No wonder, in Japan, unlike

the USA, indirect and vague communication is preferred to direct and specific references.

The implications of cross-cultural input in business and management settings have also been recognized in organizational theories and practices. Hofstede (1983) rejects ethnocentric management theories based on the value system of a particular country as untenable. He undertook a massive project involving fifty countries between 1967 and 1978. His objective was to describe national cultures along four dimensions:

1. Individualism versus collectivism
2. Large and small power distance
3. Strong and weak uncertainty avoidance
4. Masculinity versus feminity

He claims that management practitioners and management theorists over the past eighty years have been blind to the extent to which activities like 'management' and 'organizing' are culturally dependent. His findings indicate that it was a *naive assumption that management is the same or is becoming the same around the world* and was *not tenable in view of the demonstrated differences in national cultures.* If Hofstede's claim is sustainable, and I think it is, then it has equally compelling implications for the analysis of business and perhaps a number of other professional genres. Genre, after all, is a socio-culturally dependent communicative event and is judged effective to the extent that it can ensure pragmatic success in the business or other professional context in which it is used.

2.5 Conclusions – strengths and limitations

The notion of genre analysis as presented here is a very powerful system of analysis in that it allows a far thicker description of functional varieties of written and spoken language than that offered by any other system of analysis in existing literature. As pointed out earlier, it expends linguistic analysis from linguistic description to explanation taking into account not only socio-cultural but psycho-linguistic factors too. Explanation of this kind is crucial to the understanding and construction of professional and academic genres because it not only clarifies the communicative goals of the discourse community in question, but also the individual strategies employed by

the members to achieve these goals. This aspect of genre analysis is particularly relevant for any form of communicative language teaching, particularly ESP. Munby (1978) rightly emphasized the role of socio-cultural factors in communicative syllabus design. Unfortunately, however, his model turned out to be somewhat inadequate because of a neglect of psycholinguistic factors, which are equally important. An additional advantage of looking at linguistic description at the three levels proposed here is that it will allow for the findings to be used more creatively even when one wishes to focus on grammar, which is very much expected of an ESL/ESP teacher in a number of teaching situations, where learners do not feel happy unless the course includes some emphasis on grammar. In such cases, the findings at Level 1 (see section 2.3) can be used to focus on relevant areas of grammar, but the explanation for the use of grammatical features will come from findings at Levels 2 and 3, thus making it more specifically relevant to a particular genre.

One of the main limitations of such an approach appears to be that it might encourage prescription rather than creativity in application; however we must realize that one can be more effectively creative in communication when one is well aware of the rules and conventions of the genre. Exploiting rules and conventions for the sake of creativity and innovation is good but it is much better to do so after one has developed at least a good awareness of, if not a good mastery over such conventions. Moreover, analysis of generic conventions need not always be used prescriptively. As Hart (1986:280) points out, genre analysis is **pattern seeking** rather than **pattern imposing**.

The procedures for genre analysis outlined in the preceding sections appear to be atomistic; however, in actual practice they are part of an activity which is holistic and, in a way, indivisible. Every step described above is understood in the context of the whole. These steps have been artificially separated for the sake of convenient formalization and systematic discussion. Moreover, it is not the intention to suggest that in all such investigations, the analyst must go through all the stages listed above and certainly not in that order. The steps should be used selectively and in a flexible order depending upon the degree of prior knowledge (it may be the knowledge of the communicative setting, content or form) of the genre that the analyst brings to a particular analytical task. Under levels of linguistic analysis, for example, one does not go linearly from Level 1 to 3 in that order. Sometimes it is more convenient to begin with Level 3 looking at the regularities of organization, than with statistical analysis of surface features. In actual practice, analysis at any level helps the investigator

to understand the structuring at other levels. For instance, analysis of text-patterning, on the one hand, will have to be based on some perception of the statistical significance of that feature in the genre (Level 1) and, on the other hand, it must be explained in terms of the communicative purpose of the genre, which is indicated in the cognitive structuring of the genre (Level 3). Similarly, Level 3 analysis of the cognitive structuring, to a large extent, has to be based on the study of the lexical signals that one reads in the genre (Level 1). Therefore, it is always advisable to think of linguistic analysis of genres as one major activity comprising these three components. An adequate description and a satisfactory understanding of any genre should provide answers to as many of the questions as can be legitimately raised within the framework outlined here. How this works and what sort of answers one can get and what conclusions one can draw from such analyses, will be taken up in Part 2.