

## **“Hybridisation: how language users graft new discourses on old root stock”**

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At times, language users are likely to find themselves coping with the production of types of discourse which are to a greater or lesser extent unfamiliar to them. Some of these genres (e.g. in the academic sphere) are well established, with more or less explicitly formulated conventions and with expert users who may monitor and guide novices. Others involve social roles which are recurrent in the culture but which any individual may occupy relatively infrequently and will typically learn to handle at least partially on their own (e.g. in many asymmetric dyads, such as solicitor-client consultations, only one of the participants is trained to carry out their role). While there has been much research on how novices are helped to become more proficient in handling unfamiliar discourses, there has been somewhat less attention paid to the linguistic resources that they bring to the task (though see, for example, Ivanič 1998).

An extra dimension has been added in recent years by the rapid spread of the Internet: this has made available opportunities for any user to produce for public consumption genres such as film and restaurant reviews which were previously likely to be produced only by experts. In this presentation, I will focus on an exploration of the lexicogrammatical features of texts which result when non-expert writers go about mastering unfamiliar discourse types. The initial hypothesis is that the result will be a hybrid between the discourse types with which they are already familiar (their individual repertoires, in Martin's 2006 terms) and features of the target genre as produced by experts, and that the parts played by these two main sources will be identifiable. I will use Internet texts produced in various contexts to investigate the linguistic characteristics of some of these hybrids, and to illustrate corpus-based methods by which these characteristics may be probed. The aim is to attempt to establish patterns in the kinds of sources that are drawn on and in the kinds of features which are likely to be brought in from each of the sources. The wider implications of this type of discourse hybridisation will also be discussed.

### **Reference**

- Ivanič, Roz. 1998. *Writing and Identity: The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Martin, J. R. 2006. “Genre, Ideology and Intertextuality: A Systemic Functional Perspective”, *Linguistics and the Human Sciences*, 2(2). 275-298.

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