We Do Need to Develop the Perspectives: In Pursuit of Options for Triangulating Academic Discourse Studies

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Abstract

This paper assumes that developing strong models of academic discourse analysis would not by itself guarantee researchers' access to the realities of academic communication and that any development in the theory of academic discourse analysis should also be informed and equipped with developments in wider applied linguistics research methodology. The current paper proposes that the departure point of this dialogue between academic discourse theory and research methodology should be the concept of "triangulation". While in applied linguistics research context, the concept has been defined as a research strategy aiming at developing diverse dimensions to approach the phenomena under investigation, I have argued that triangulation should be redefined and further operationalized in light of the realities of academic discourses and the very demands and desires of academic discourse researchers. To do so, a set of options including genre-based triangulation, culture-based triangulation, discipline-based triangulation, language-based triangulation, mode-based triangulation, time-based triangulation, expertise-based triangulation, analyst-based triangulation, corpus-based triangulation, and audience-based triangulation has been proposed.

Keywords: academic discourse, academic discourse analysis, applied linguistics, research strategy, triangulation

Introduction

Interest in the qualities of academic discourses dates back to the 1960s when ESP scholars were searching for models by which they could describe language in light of the specific communicative demands of the potential users. The earliest attempts to understand the qualities of academic discourses as a response to the above-mentioned necessity can be found in two major traditions of research which developed during the 1960s and the 1970s: "*Register Analysis*" and "*Grammatical-Rhetorical Analysis*". However, the 1980s marks the departure points of one of the most influential and insightful developments in academic discourse analysis – Swalesian tradition of "*Genre Analysis*" which has itself gone through three major phases of development: the 1980s as the period of formation of the concept of genre and its operational analytic procedure "move analysis" (see Swales, 1981, 1985), the 1990s as the period of prioritizing the concept of "communicative purpose" (see Swales, 1990), and a third period developing the concept of genre into a wider metaphor defined in light of concepts like frames of social action, language standards, biological species, families and prototypes, institutions, and speech acts (see Swales, 2004). This theoretical enrichment has been supported by a number of other movements, amongst which we can refer to *"Contrastive-rhetoric"* (which assumes that academic discourse does not have a universal and culturally-homogeneous conception and authors belonging to diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds might shape their academic arguments and consequently their texts in ways appropriate to their own cultural meaning-making traditions); "*Corpus-based Analysis*" (which provides tremendous statistically-grounded insights as to how language use varies in different situations); "*Ethnographic Analysis*" (which locates academic discourse researchers within an insider position, emphasizing the priority of a longitudinal engagement with participants in their natural settings); and "*Metadiscourse Analysis*" (which has focused on the social, interpersonal, and attitudinal aspects of academic communication).

This historical development reveals a number of considerable facts. One of these key facts is that from the very beginning academic discourse analysis traditions have been in pursuit of rigorous models which not only provide detailed information about formal properties of academic texts but also link these properties to discursive processes and consequently to a thicker and richer description of the connections between textual properties and contextual variables. Almost all models of analysis have been more or less loyal to this commitment. The natural affinity of these models to wider discourse analysis approaches has created theoretical bridges between them and academic discourse analysis models have been tremendously inspired by developments in theory of text, discourse, and context.

Development of richer and thicker analytic models: In pursuit of a comprehensive picture of realities of academic communication

The author's argument is based on the assumption that developing strong analytic models including a richer account of text, discourse and context would not necessarily guarantee researchers' fully-fledged access to the realities of academic communication and that any development in the theory of text, discourse, and

context should also be informed with developments in wider applied linguistics research methodology. This assumption has also been acknowledged by Paltridge (2020) who argues that a multi-perspective approach to research in academic discourse analysis should embrace the concept of "*triangulation*" in its research design; in other words, academic discourse analysis needs to equip itself and join forces with research designs and procedures (developing in wider applied linguistics research) which help us see academic communication from as many diverse perspectives as possible. The point is that theoretical developments of academic discourse analysis and consequently development of stronger analytic tools to deal with text, discourse, and context should not and cannot turn their backs to developments in wider applied linguistics research methods and a kind of conceptual communication should be established between these two. This dialogue has constituted the philosophy of applied linguistics: a mutual dialogue with areas of language related problems and feeding them with solutions on the basis of the findings of other disciplines. We do have a real problem here: in order to develop the communicative competence required for effective communication in target academic / scientific events, EAP needs comprehensive models of language description – models which not only describe text well, but also link the textual properties to discursive and contextual properties of target situations. Commitment of ESP and EAP to solving such problems requires a constant, never-ending dialogue between academic discourse analysis and wider research methodology developments in applied linguistics. In line with Paltridge (2020), I have found considerable potentials in the concept of triangulation as means of developing a dialogue between academic discourse analysis and applied linguistics research methodology. Some aspects of this potential are discussed in the forthcoming sections.

The concept of triangulation and its inherent potentials

While in its original context (i.e. construction, surveying and navigation at sea), the triangulation metaphor refers to the idea of using two identified points to find the position of an unidentified third point, by making a triangle, in applied linguistics research context (mainly inspired by the work of scholars like Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2011; Denzin, 1970; Webb et al., 1966), it has been defined as a qualitative research strategy which aims at capturing a wholistic picture of the phenomena under investigation. This is achieved by analyzing data gathered from different sources, using multiple groups of participants, and multiple research procedures. While the general objective of triangulation is to know more about a phenomenon by using different methods of data collection and analysis, a more precise characterization, preferred by some, is that triangulation involves approaching a given phenomenon from diverse perspectives in order to get greater insights into it. Riazi (2016) argues that the rationale for such cross-validation lies in the fact that any shortcomings in a data source, method, or perspective can be compensated by another in order to make more reliable and valid conclusions about the phenomena under investigation. This is not an abstract necessity. As researchers we have all experienced the necessity of triangulation when faced with what I call "*what-if-dilemmas*". The "what-ifs" whose origins are the researchers themselves,

reviewers, critics and even readers encourage us to wonder what would have happened if, in conducting a particular research project, if we had used different data, different instruments, different models, different participants, different theories, different methods, different analysts, different contexts, different time, different scale, etc. And, we usually have an implicit impression that different choices could result in different findings, different interpretations of the findings, and generally different pictures of the realities being researched. It seems that each choice equips us with a different torch by which we will have a chance to look at "the elephant in the dark room". Is there a solution? Is there a research design construct which would provide a chance to see the bigger picture and get rid of this dilemma?

It seems that development of the concept of triangulation has been the outcome of such necessities. A construct by which we would be able to see the researched phenomena from multiple perspectives and consequently enrich our research, to facilitate validity checks, to cross-validate, to reduce the chance of systematic bias, to cross-check evidence, and to develop more comprehensive understandings. In the context of applied linguistics, we can even think about more macro reasons behind such necessities: shift of research paradigms from disciplinary to interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research (see, for instance, Pun, 2020), ever-increasing demands for mixed-methods research (see, for instance, Hashemi, 2020), and essence of developing local research perspectives in non-western contexts (see, for instance, Severo & Makoni, 2020).

The multiple perspectives we are talking about here can be differently translated into the context of research depending on the particularities of research projects; however, a well-established classification offered by Cohen et al. (2011) goes as the followings:

- Methodological perspectives

- Theoretical perspectives

- Investigator perspectives

- Time perspectives

- Space perspectives

I believe that while the classification proposed by Cohen at al. (2011) can effectively work in the triangulation of academic discourse studies (and this has been discussed and demonstrated by Paltridge, 2020, as well), it needs to be redefined and further operationalized. In fact, this argument assumes that triangulation is a relatively general and abstract concept which needs to be redefined in light of the necessities of the particular research traditions which adopt it for their research designs. Academic discourse studies have their own problems, their own questions and of course deal with realities and phenomena which are intimately relevant to academic communication. This requires such studies to approach the realities and phenomena from their own unique perspectives and consequently define the alternative perspectives in ways partially or fundamentally distinct from

other applied linguistics research traditions. If the realities of academic communication have justified the emergence and development of independent research traditions over the past 60 years as I have indicated above in this paper, the same justification would support redefining triangulation and operationalizing it in distinct ways as well. One such localization and operationalization of the concept has been introduced by Swales (1998) through what he calls textography – a research strategy which brings together elements of academic discourse analysis with techniques of ethnography such as document analysis, interviews, and observations. This research strategy focuses on the contextualization and situated nature of academic texts in order to develops an insider understanding of the worlds in which texts are produced, why they are produced the way they are, what shapes their production, and the values that underlie the texts which have been produced. A typical example of such thick description can be found in Swales' (2018) textography of the texts produced and consumed in three different floors of an academic building (at the University of Michigan). During a three-year period, Swales conducted a multi-perspective analysis by looking at the texts produced by different people who worked there, collecting observation data, carrying out document and correspondence analysis, and conducting text-based interviews with employees working on each of the three floors of the building. This operationalized and localized version of the concept of triangulation has also been welcomed by a number of other studies. Some of these studies have been summarized below in order to help us develop a tentative reformulation of the general concept of triangulation:

- Paltridge (2004): the exegeses written by master students of art and design; combining the analysis of exegeses with an examination of other texts such as postgraduate student handbooks, examiners' guides, examiners' reports, and annual reports on the master's degree; carrying out interviews with students, advisors, and examiners;

- Paltridge et al. (2012a, 2012b), Ravelli et al. (2013), Starfield et al. (2012): texts written by doctoral students of visual and performing arts as part of their requirements for their degrees; using a wide range of data (nationwide survey, dissertations, supervisor questionnaires, student interviews, supervisor interviews, university prospectuses, information provided to students in relation to their candidature, published research on doctoral research, in-house art school publications, discussion papers, and attendance at roundtable discussions and exhibition openings);

- Paltridge (2017): investigation of reviewers' reports on submissions to academic journals using corpus-informed discourse analysis, survey, and interview data;

- Li (2007): investigation of chemistry doctoral students' attempts to publish their works using process logs, drafts of students' writing, email exchanges, and interview data;

- Flowerdew (2002): investigation of a PhD student's struggles with getting published using student's drafts and final texts, interviews and email

communication, student's communication with editors, reviewers, and in-house editor, and filed notes;

- Li (2005): investigation of a physics student trying to publish his work using conversations and emails with the student, drafts of the manuscripts, communication with journal editors, reviewers' reports, and interviews with the student's supervisor;

- Mur Duenas (2012): investigation of four scholars' writing for publication practices using text trajectories, editors' letters, referees' reports, authors' responses to the reports, and interviews with the authors;

- Curry (2014): examination of the use of graphics in the scholarly writing of writers in engineering using focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, audio and video recorded participant observations, field notes and drafts of students' texts;

- Hewings (2004): investigation of the matters most frequently evaluated in journal reviews using corpus analysis, and a combination of software and manual analysis of the data;

- Lillis and Curry (2010): investigation of second language writers' writing for publication by collecting data from 50 professional scholars, in 12 academic institutions, across four different countries; using a longitudinal in design conducted over a period of eight years; wide range of data including texts written by the study's participants; talk around text sessions; language and literacy history interviews', emails between the researchers and the participants; correspondence between participants and their colleagues, reviewers, and editors; observational field notes / research diaries; telephone conversations; network diagrams drawn by participants; and documentary data such as policy documents from each of the national sites;

- Carnell et al. (2008): investigation of the experiences of published authors in the same academic discipline and at the same academic institution using semi-structured interviews, and exchanging ideas through email, telephone conversations and meetings.

The value of these attempts cannot be denied. As we can see, academic discourse researchers have understood the significance of triangulation and have integrated triangulation strategies within their research design. However, I still believe that realities of academic communication provide further possibilities for multi-perspective research on academic discourses. I have devoted the remaining sections of this article to developing a set of options for the triangulation of academic discourse studies on the basis of these realities.

A reflection on the realities of academic communication and its implications for a wider model of triangulation

To capture a true sense of realities of academic communication, we need to think again and again about what the traditions of academic discourse analysis as outlined above have been searching for. I believe that this development has been in

pursuit of a comprehensive picture of not only textual properties but also intertextual, discursive, interdiscursive, and wider sociocultural factors which play a role in academic meaning-making. Hence, a multi-perspective research model needs to be informed by such realities; in fact, a preliminary model of triangulation in academic discourse studies is expected to bring together the very ingredients of the analytic models which have been emerging since the 1960s to respond to the development of theoretical assumptions and practical needs. The proposed options should not turn their back to textual, discursive, and contextual variables which affect academic communication. The proposed options for triangulation should truly reflect the inherent ambitions and motivations underlying the development of analytic models in multiple diverse perspectives; hence, concepts like genre, discipline, culture, language, and author should constitute the core of such model. In fact, capturing the true picture of the realities of academic communication would not be made possible only through the development of analytic models; this development should be simultaneously reflected in the very construct of research design. Triangulation as defined and operationalized appropriately in the context of academic communication studies is a response to such a necessity. What comes next is the outcome of my attempt to do so.

A preliminary set of options for triangulating academic discourse studies

I have devoted this section of the article to the development of a preliminary set of options for the triangulation of academic discourse analysis projects. As already emphasized, this is not meant to question the validity of already existing models in wider applied linguistics research; it should be seen as a further operationalized concept of triangulation for academic discourse studies. The proposed framework considers the followings as some possible dimensions through which triangulation of academic discourse analysis projects would be made possible:

(1) Genre-based triangulation: The theory of genre as developed in light of Swalesian thinking (1981, 1990, 2004) makes the concept a right site for triangulation. By emphasizing a number of significant contextual factors (e.g., communicative purpose, audience) which play a role in dividing texts into different genres, the concept helps academic discourse researchers investigate how such contextual factors could differently shape both the formal and functional properties of academic discourses. The theory of genre rightly emphasizes that the concept of academic discourse and its formal / functional properties should not be seen as homogeneous concepts and any minor variation in terms of audience, purpose, etc. could lead to different distribution of discursive qualities.

In Kuhi and Behnam (2011), we have demonstrated some potentials of what we can now call genre-based triangulation. The study investigates the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse features in a range of genres (research articles, handbook chapters, scholarly textbooks, introductory textbooks) selected on the basis of the concept of accreditation of academic knowledge (see Fleck, 1979 and Kuhn, 1970 for a discussion on this). The findings show that the use of metadiscourse is fundamentally affected by the role and status of the academic genres in this continuum: compared to pure research genres which are mainly seen

as the medium of knowledge construction, the academic genres playing a role in the accreditation of academic knowledge have different discursive objectives and different audiences, which gives rise to differences in the use of metadiscourse features.

Of course, an important point which should be taken into consideration here is related to the criteria for the selection of the genres to be included in triangulated genre-based projects. Not every random selection of genres would guarantee the inherent objectives of triangulation. The selection criteria should be informed by what Swales (2004) has referred to as a "constellation" and Bhatia (2004) as a "colony" of academic discourses. In light of such concepts, Devitt (1991) has introduced the concept of "genre sets" to refer to that component of the genre constellation which a particular group or individual engages in; these represent a full collection of texts which a particular group deals with in a particular context. Two further developments of the concept of constellation as mentioned by Hyland (2006) are "genre chains"; this refers to the ways spoken and written texts connect together in a particular social context – and "genre networks" – which refers to the ways genres arrayed together interact with, draw upon, and respond to another in a particular context (also see Paltridge, 2012). Hence, triangulating a given academic discourse analysis project in light of the theory of genre demands a careful decision on which set, network, or chain the given genre belongs to and if it is going to be compared and contrasted with a member of the same set, network, or chain or one belonging to another. The selection would certainly require strong justification in light of what a given text does within a certain constellation or colony and why it is going to be compared and contrasted with a genre existing within the same or outside the boundaries of the colony or constellation.

2. Culture-based triangulation: In light of a large number of cross-cultural investigations of academic discourses we have learnt that authors' affiliations to different cultural backgrounds could shape the formal and discursive properties of academic texts differently. Despite the fact that the behavioristic and positivist conceptions of academic / scientific writing strongly opposed the role of cultural patterns of thinking and intercultural rhetoric, in light of a social constructivist paradigm and weakening position of behavioristic thinking, cultural differences in academic communication are seen as natural and acceptable. This provides us with a perspective through which the findings of a certain project could be triangulated by looking at that same phenomenon in the output of authors with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Yakhontova (2002) is a typical example approaching differences in the conference abstracts from a cross-cultural point of view. Working on Ukrainian / Russian versus English corpora, the investigation has shown that Ukrainian / Russian abstracts are similar to short research papers, tend to be relatively global in description of research, and are less personal than the English abstracts, and with little attention to the originality of the research. This allows Yakhontova to link the differences to a number of factors including the specific contextual conditions of the organization of conferences, different relations between academic institutions and

the reality of market society, dominance of different ideological systems, and dominance of different cultural and intellectual traditions.

The dominant pattern of triangulation here has been comparing and contrasting academic texts authored by native English writers to and with those authored by non-native ones, which has been justified by the fact that most of academic genres strictly follow the conventions imposed by anglophone authors and that authors from other cultures need to get rid of their cultural ways of composing and move towards a more "homogeneous" platform of communication. Based on what he calls a "liberation theology", Swales (1997) has developed a detailed criticism of this inviting academic communication to a more pluralistic mode of communication, which is expected to encourage the researchers to deeply explore such differences by looking at more diverse potentials of cross-cultural comparison and contrast.

3. Discipline-based triangulation: In light of social constructivism, we have learned that disciplines create different intellectual climates for members of different academic communities; these intellectual climates influence the problems investigated, the methods employed, the way the findings are seen, and the way texts are written up. In light of this understanding, our attention would be drawn to the idea that academic discourse as used by members of different academic communities is used to communicate not only with diverse non-academic communities, but with the members insider to the community. The concern for addressing the members insider to the community would result in the development of a number of conventions which would, among other things, restrict how something can be said, and how academic meanings can be textualized. This is where the role of triangulation should be highlighted. Through triangulation, we will be able to understand how texts carrying similar names and belonging to similar generic categories are discursively shaped and textually realized differently in different academic disciplines. Being a member of a different academic community means different "ways of being"; this would influence the ways members perform, the views they have, the values they believe in, and the identities they adopt (see Becher, 1989). All these will find their ways into the discourses of disciplines and, through triangulation, we will be able to see how and why disciplinary discourses, texts, and practices vary. Cross-disciplinary triangulation can help us understand that and that there are no homogeneous conventions of language use in academic communication which apply to the discourses of all disciplines.

Swales et al.'s (1998) study of the functions of imperatives in research articles across ten disciplines is a good example of this of type triangulation. The study which identified the six most frequent imperative patterns in research articles and categorized the discursive functions of the identified patterns reported variation in the frequency of occurrence of imperatives. The findings revealed that the three top fields (statistics, experimental geology, and linguistics) tend to produce texts which consist of solid paragraph blocks, contain mathematical, experimental or illustrative elements which demand more specific forms of reader-text management. All this is achieved through the use of imperatives. The analysis of the footnotes and endnotes also revealed that the use of imperatives had a strong humanities flavor.

This type of triangulation has a great potential in showing that language use is affected by the differences in the ways disciplines see the world and perform their academic tasks. In fact, triangulation here is expected to help us understand that disciplines have different ways of constructing knowledge, different research practices, and different ways of seeing the world, and these differences are usually textualized in diverse forms of argument and expression.

4. Language-based triangulation: Intimately connected to culture-based dimension of triangulation and implicitly carrying all the advantages of that type of triangulation discussed above, language-based triangulation is expected to develop a cross-linguistic comparison and contrast of the findings of academic discourse studies. The assumption is that languages do not follow a universal pattern of textualizing certain meaning potentials and functions. It is a well-established fact that the way form-function relationships are established could differ from one language to another; consequently, like other domains of human communication, the same or similar academic / scientific meanings and functions might be expressed through different textual resources in different languages. Through this type of triangulation, we will find fresh means of understanding the formal / functional potentials of different languages for the expression of what is deemed to be academic / scientific meaning within different cultures. In fact, I find the potentials of this type of triangulation within the orientation captured by Belcher and Braine (1995). They argue that EAP should be the informed understanding of the rigor of explicit cognitive awareness of texts, subtexts, and contexts of academic discourse; this is expected to enable members to join collectivist efforts without losing their "home perspectives". And I think this assumption gains an indispensable credit for triangulation as an EAP research construct.

A considerable example of studies with such orientation is Hyland (2005). In a meta-review of a number of cross-linguistic investigations of different features of academic discourses like nominalization, indirectness, implicitness, theme and reflection, the researcher shows that compared with other languages (here Japanese, Chinese, Finnish, and Thai), Anglo-American academic English is more transparent in terms of its formal structure and purpose, employs more recent citations, uses fewer rhetorical questions, generally does not tolerate asides, is more tentative, divides the text more strictly, uses more inter-sentential transitions, and is more reader-friendly.

Information emerging from this type of triangulation can help the researchers develop a descriptive picture of differences in the academic discourses of different languages and language-using groups. This would further result in understanding that conventions of academic / scientific meaning-making are not uniform across languages; the universal academic / scientific meaning making is a myth. This would certainly result in questioning the monolithic view of academic communication in EAP pedagogy and, as Ventola (1992) has argued, would pave the way for the development of convenient ways of dealing with intercultural linguistic problems in academic writing.

5. Mode-based triangulation: Intimately bound to the concept of genre and the communicative purposes underlying academic genres, what I have called "mode" here can be seen as a potential dimension of triangulating academic discourse studies. Although academic genres are conventionally divided into written genres (e.g., research articles, book reviews, textbooks, and grant proposals) and spoken genres (e.g., lectures, seminars, student presentations, and dissertation defenses), this division should not be understood purely based upon the oral / written modes of communication; the division also reflects complex facts about the social structure of academy and the criteria used for the division and distribution of genres. Hence, we expect that triangulating the outcomes of research on certain written genres with those belonging to the spoken category would reveal significant facts about how genres function in the complex social structure of the academy. Swales' key concept of "communicative purpose" (1990) could be seen as a guiding principle here; however, his later development of the concept as a "metaphorical endeavor" (2004) (genres as frames for action, genres as language standards, genres as biological species, genres as prototypes, genres as institutions, and genres as speech acts) could also shed light on how written / spoken dichotomy is triggered by the social functions and status of texts in academic life. Hence, what might sound as a simple system of categorization in the first impression would certainly prove to be a significant mechanism of meaning making in academic communication. Triangulation would certainly be of great significance here.

Although, to the best of my knowledge, this direction of triangulation has not received due attention, a recent study by Vasheghani Farahani (2020) on the distributional patterns of interactive and interactional metadiscourse features in *British Academic Written English Corpus* and *British Academic Spoken English Corpus* is an interesting example. The findings reveal that, in both corpora, the authors tend to use interactive metadiscourse more frequently. Furthermore, in the written corpus, the transitions and endophoric markers are used more frequently; in the spoken corpus, however, endophoric markers and transitions are the most frequently employed resources. Among the interactional metadiscourse resources, hedges and self-mentions are the most frequent in the written form, but in the spoken, self-mentions and boosters are more frequent.

6. Chronological triangulation: It is a well-established fact that academic disciplines evolve in order to adjust themselves to the emerging needs of academic communities. In response to such changes, academic genres also change and evolve (see Devitt, 1997; Kress, 2010; Miller, 1984; Swales, 2004). In light of the developments of the theory of genre in academic discourse studies, we have understood that genres are not and should not be seen as static constructs; their formal and functional properties are connected with complexities and dynamicity of the social practices of discourse communities (Berkenkotter & Huckin,1995; Dudley-Evans, 1994). I have proposed chronological triangulation as a mechanism through which the researchers can penetrate into the very heart of this change. Through such triangulation, we would be able to explore not only the formal and functional changes taking place in academic genres but also the origins and motivations behind such changes.

Mainly motivated by the logic outlined above, Rezaei et al. (2020) looked at the evolution of stance markers in three outstanding journals of applied linguistics over a period of three decades. The study detected a significant decrease in the occurrence of stance markers in the corpus. The authors linked this to the radical shift of academic practices in applied linguistics. In what the authors labelled as a surprising picture of change, they reported that while they had seen an overall decrease in the expression of hedges, boosters, and attitude markers over time, they had witnessed the greatest change in the frequency of self-mentions among all stance categories. They related this change to the development of a promotional discourse, the process of commodification of academic knowledge and fundamental changes in professionalism.

Such attempts to triangulate are ideally expected to explore the changes taking place in the epistemological and methodological assumptions of academic disciplines, and the way academic discourses are becoming more and more hybrid.

7. Expertise-based triangulation: The rigid boundaries which used to strictly divide the members of academic / scientific communities in terms of the types of texts which could be produced by different members are getting looser and looser. This is due to the changes which are taking place in the mechanisms of knowledge construction, the mechanisms of membership, and the social structure of academic communities. In light of these and a large number of other changes, mechanisms of access to texts have also been fundamentally altered.

A good example of such a shift in what I call "access mechanism" is related to research articles which used to be produced mainly by expert members of academic communities; however, due to the changes in the structure of higher education, increasing number of post-graduate students, and the implicit desire of universities to elevate themselves through more and more publication, the genre has been made widely available to novice members of the academic communities (e.g., MA candidates) as well. For instance, in the academic institution I belong to, publishing a number of research articles in high-ranking academic journals is considered a pre-requisite for defending theses / dissertations and even graduation. The wider access of novice members to the production of such a complex genre has hence resulted in problems related to guaranteeing the standard qualities of it and thus become a source of concern for EAP pedagogy.

In light of such developments and changes, I see expertise-based triangulation as a means of comparing and contrasting how the formal and functional qualities of academic genres made available to academics belonging to different expertise level could differ. The most immediate consumers of such triangulated projects would certainly be EAP pedagogues who are trying to bridge the gap between more and less expert members of the academic communities.

Khoshsima et al. (2018) is a good example of research conducted in light of the considerations outlined above. The study starts with the assumption that when novice academic writers enter an academic community, they are expected to face probable challenges when they try to meet the rhetorical expectations established by the experienced members; therefore, they may not be able to write in a way

acceptable to the professional members. The researchers then explore the probable rhetorical distance between these two groups by focusing upon the employment of interactional metadiscourse markers in the writings of some novice and expert members of the academic community of applied linguistics. The findings indicate that the novice members use far less interactional metadiscourse markers than the expert ones in their texts (here research articles). The researchers conclude that novice members of the discourse community are far away from the rhetorical restrictions established by the expert members of the discipline.

8. Analyst-analyst / author-based triangulation: Researchers of academic discourses usually approach texts with analytic kaleidoscopes, which shapes the way they see textual and discursive properties. These kaleidoscopes have diverse potentials: while they help us penetrate into some complex layers of textual and discursive properties, they could also hide some significant realities about the nature of academic communication. They impose certain ways of seeing and conceal some others. Hence, what a certain researcher might see as relevant in academic meaning making could be seen differently by another analyst and even by the producers of texts. Hence, what I have labelled as analyst-analyst / author type of triangulation can provide fresh perspectives through which textual and discursive properties can be approached from other analysts' and the text authors' own points of view.

Insightful examples of such triangulation can be found in Soltani et al.'s (2021) study on move recycling in academic research articles. Mainly approaching this discursive strategy form a cross-cultural perspective, the study ends in a different picture – that at least from a statistical, quantitative perspective the use of move recycling in academic research articles is not associated with the authors' national / cultural backgrounds. The researchers then go through a triangulation phase by email communication with a sample of authors whose texts were included for analysis. The guiding hypothesis of the study (that there should be a relationship between national culture and move recycling) is missing among the themes which emerge from the qualitative phase of the project. The interviewed authors mainly highlight the role of research article length, conventions of academic communication in the disciplines they belong to and their own concern with guiding the readers in the text and making their prose more readable.

9. Audience-based triangulation: Academic / scientific texts carrying the same content for different audiences can also provide an insightful perspective for triangulation. Intimately bound to the concept of genre and communicative purpose, composing the same content to different audiences can result in different ways of shaping both the formal and functional qualities of academic texts.

Babapoor and Kuhi (2018) is a good example of this type of triangulation where the researchers work on how popularization of academic discourses can affect the use of informal elements. Focusing on three corpora – scientific journal articles, scientific magazine articles, and scientific newspaper articles – the researchers detect considerable variations regarding how communicative purposes and target audiences might influence the way informal elements are employed: among the selected corpora, magazine article were reported to carry the most frequent use of such

features, which is linked to the different conceptions of audience and the different conventions of publication dominating the three genres.

The findings of such projects could be significant. In fact, the sociocultural changes shaping in academic communication have resulted in further diversification of the audiences of academic discourses. Most academic texts used to be written by experts and consumed only by experts; however, the necessities for further popularization of academic knowledge have pushed these texts into wider social contexts where the established qualities and conventions of academic meaning-making need to be re-adjusted for a different audience. This formal / functional re-adjustment and its contextual variables can constitute the rationale for further triangulated projects.

10. Corpus-based triangulation: The merits of utilizing large corpora of academic discourses have already been demonstrated within the corpus-based approaches to academic discourse analysis. These will help us get rid of intuitions about the textual / discursive properties of academic communication and base our judgements on solid empirical evidence. Availability of a large number of already constructed oral and written academic discourse corpora combined with the development of sophisticated technology for collecting and analyzing any other possible corpora has developed promising perspectives for academic discourse researchers. In light of all these, what can be witnessed in small, researcher-made corpora can be compared against relatively larger ones to provide the necessary empirical support for generalizing the findings of such studies and guaranteeing a so-called external validity for them. Based on such assumptions, I have included this as another possible dimension of triangulating academic discourse analysis projects.

Conclusions and Implications

The current preliminary proposal has been made on the basis of the assumption that meeting the ideal ambition of academic discourse studies – depicting a rich picture of the realities of academic communication – would not be possible only by reference to the theory of discourse. Our attempts to develop a true picture of academic meaning making also requires joining forces with development in wider applied linguistics research methods. I have argued that the concept of "triangulation" has a potential to meet the above-mentioned objective, and that the concept needs to be redefined and operationalized in light of the realities of academic communication. This redefinition has resulted in developing a set of options for triangulation. The proposed options cannot have a static nature and ongoing dialogue between the general theory of discourse analysis, academic discourse analysis, and applied linguistics research methodology is expected to further enrich the set of options proposed. This enrichment is much needed since academic discourse analysis is a problem-oriented area of research and its findings are of utmost significance in EAP pedagogy. These needs have for decades motivated the expansion of academic discourse analysis and it seems that further complexities of modern academy and academic communication also require development of richer multilayered and multidimensional perspectives and procedures of analysis. I believe that academic discourse research developing in

light of the current argument would have great potentials for feeding EAP pedagogy and meeting the expectations of its multiple participants.

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