

Constructing Interpersonality

Constructing Interpersonality:
Multiple Perspectives on Written Academic
Genres

Edited by

Rosa Lorés-Sanz, Pilar Mur-Dueñas
and Enrique Lafuente-Millán

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P U B L I S H I N G

Constructing Interpersonality: Multiple Perspectives on Written Academic Genres,
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INTRODUCTION

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The view that academic discourse is, by definition, impersonal has long been superseded. It seems unquestionable now that the interpersonal component of texts (i.e. the ways in which the writers project themselves and their audience in the discourse) is an essential factor determining the success of scholarly communication and has become a fundamental issue in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). In line with the growing awareness of the critical importance of interpersonal aspects in academic communication, over the last few years the InterLAE research group at the *Universidad de Zaragoza* (Spain) has explored the way interpersonal rhetorical features are used in research articles and abstracts from different fields of knowledge and has adopted different contrastive perspectives of analysis: interdisciplinary, intercultural and intergeneric.

The research interests of the InterLAE research group mirror those of many research groups and individual scholars around the world. In keeping with this global concern with the role of interpersonal aspects in academic communication, a decision was made to set up a forum which would provide other researchers with an opportunity to reflect, debate and share their research on this area of academic writing. With that objective in mind, the three-day International Conference *Interpersonality in Written Academic Discourse: Perspectives across Languages and Cultures* was held in Jaca (*Universidad de Zaragoza*, Spain) in December 2008,¹ which had this concept as the central theme around which the papers and keynote lectures revolved.

¹ The editors are indebted for their financial help to the Spanish Ministry of Innovation and Science (*MICINN*) (Ref. FFI2008-00297-E), to the local authorities (*Diputación General de Aragón*) (Ref. 245-156), and to the Vicerrectorate for Research of the *Universidad de Zaragoza* (Spain) (Ref. 245-138).

A number of the contributions presented at this conference were selected after a blind peer-review process and reshaped into research articles then compiled into the present volume. All the contributions to this volume have interpersonality as their common thread, but the articles differ in the type of genre they analyse and in the analytical perspectives and methodological approaches adopted. The studies include the cross-cultural, the cross-disciplinary, the cross-generic and even the diachronic perspective, and both corpus linguistics and/or ethnographic approaches have been taken.

The main objective of this edited volume is to provide a wide exploratory view of the many academic genres in which interpersonality is a rhetorical feature and the various analytical approaches from which the textual manifestation of that interpersonality can be studied. Each article constitutes a distinctive piece of research in which different generic and analytical perspectives are offered. As a result, each paper stands in its own right, but acquires an added value when seen in combination with the rest of the contributions to the volume. In addition, the varied origin of the contributors matches the global interest that the issue of interpersonality arouses in the field of academic discourse analysis at an international level.

The articles in this volume are arranged into four sections. The first section provides an overview of the multifaceted research carried out on written academic discourse at three European research sites and is intended to function as an introduction to the research presented in the volume. In the second section there are four articles reporting research on two genres, academic abstracts and book reviews, whose main communicative goal is to summarise, evaluate and publicize research, often performing a promotional function and therefore helping to market other related research genres such as articles and books. The next section includes research on the key genre in academic communication, the research article, which has become the fundamental means for the creation and exchange of scientific knowledge. The research reported here deals with studies of research of research articles from a wide spectrum of academic fields. Finally, the last section in this volume presents studies on a variety of rather under-researched, and consequently more peripheral, academic genres such as referee reports, (electronic) popularizations, academic weblogs, student essays and conference handouts.

The book opens with the section entitled **“Interpersonality at work”**. The three articles under it give an account of the particular research in the field of English for Academic Purposes being carried out by three different

research groups (i.e. InterLAE, CERLIS and KIAP) in three European countries (i.e. Spain, Italy and Norway, respectively). The first chapter provides an overview of the research undertaken within the InterLAE team (*Interpersonalidad en el Lenguaje Académico Escrito*) in the last few years. The research has focused on the *SERAC*, the Spanish English Research Article Corpus, compiled with the aim of analysing possible cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural and cross-generic differences in academic writing. Thus, a corpus-based analysis complemented with qualitative methods has enabled them to unveil significant differences in the use of interpersonal devices and hence in the writer-reader relationship built in (1) research articles from different academic fields, (2) research articles written in English by scholars based at Anglophone institutions and Spanish institutions and also in Spanish by Spanish scholars and (3) research articles as compared with lectures, popularizations and abstracts. A number of epistemological and social factors which define each particular discipline and culture are proposed as explanations of these differences.

In the second chapter, **Maurizio Gotti**, coordinator of the CERLIS Group (*Centro di Ricerca sui Linguaggi Specialistici*) at the *Università di Bergamo* (Italy), presents the research accomplished by the members of this team on the analysis of features of stance and authorial presence in several academic genres from several perspectives. Their research is also based on a self-compiled corpus, *CADIS* (Corpus of Academic Discourse), of research articles, books, book reviews and editorials in law, economics, linguistics and medicine. Several lines of research into the analysis of interpersonal traits have been pursued and are reported in this article. Analyses across cultures and languages have focused on book reviews and medical editorials. Book acknowledgements and research articles in hard and soft disciplines have been the basis of the study of interpersonal features across disciplines. The particular analysis of academic texts dealing with legal subjects has revealed interactional peculiarities within a particular disciplinary community. The study of potential gender differences in academic writing has been based on linguistics book reviews written by male and female authors. Finally, the contrastive analysis of research letters and research articles in medicine illustrate their interest in the exploration of interpersonality across genres. The author concludes that the textual differences found are to be seen as part of the strategic and creative choices made by authors to attain their rhetorical objectives.

Trine Dahl, a member of the KIAP project (*Kulturell Identitet i Akademisk Prosa*) based at the *Universitetet i Bergen* (Norway), presents

in the third chapter the scope and main objectives of this team. Its main research aim has been to explore whether cultural identities can be discerned in academic discourse, and if so, whether these are driven by the discipline or by the national language. Such exploration has focused on the analysis of particular interpersonal features (i.e. first person pronouns, indefinite pronouns, metatextual expressions, negation, adversative/concessive constructions and bibliographical references) in research articles in English, French and Norwegian in the fields of linguistics, economics and medicine. In her article Dahl further contributes to the project's aims by examining how new knowledge claims are constructed and promoted in the introduction and conclusion of research articles in linguistics and economics. She reveals the highly interpersonal nature of knowledge construction in these sections of the articles in both disciplines. Nevertheless, she finds new knowledge claims and metadiscursive pointers (which directly signal the relevance of the claim) to be more commonly included in the economics texts than in the linguistics ones. The author concludes that this may be a reflection of the higher level of competitiveness in the economics field and of the ensuing need to highlight personal contributions more actively in their research articles.

Part II, “**Summarising and evaluating new research**” centres on the academic genres of abstracts and book reviews, and opens with the article by **Begoña Bellés-Fortuño** and **Mercedes Querol-Julián**. The authors analyse explicit evaluative language from a cross-cultural perspective in a corpus of English and Spanish medical abstracts, focusing on the study of evaluative collocates, mainly 2 and 3-word combinations, rather than on the analysis of isolated items. The authors confirm that a higher number of combinations of evaluative items are used in the English than in the Spanish texts. Moreover, their contrastive study shows that explicit evaluation is more frequent in the English medical abstracts in the form of verbal and adjectival evaluative collocates whereas in Spanish abstracts it is usually expressed by means of adjectival and adverbial evaluative collocates. The authors conclude that pedagogical applications of this study could be implemented in EAP courses in order to help students improve their understanding of the writer's strategies for interacting with the reader and producing judgements.

The abstract is also the focus of study of **Sally Burgess** and **Pedro Martín-Martín**'s paper, where a diachronic perspective is adopted to investigate interpersonal features in English as used by Spanish scholars in journal abstracts from two disciplines, i.e. linguistics and psychology. Their starting point is the reported tendency of Spanish-speaking scholars to use a more impersonal style, as compared to the writing of English-

speaking background writers. Their study demonstrates that Spanish psychology authors show, to a greater extent than the Spanish linguistics authors, an increasing awareness of an adherence to the discourse practices of abstract writing in international publications by making more extensive use of overt personal attribution in the texts, especially in the last two decades. The authors suggest that English discourse norms are encroaching on those of Spanish at different rates across the disciplines. Thus, whereas in psychology the abstract in English has rapidly become a crucial means of publicising one's research for an English-using readership, in linguistics there is a much slower and less pronounced shift towards seeing an English-using audience as a major target, with the consequence that their research may remain relatively unknown and uncited outside the Spanish-speaking world.

In the third paper in Part II the discussion switches to another academic genre of increasing interest for EAP analysts: the book review. **María Lluïsa Gea-Valor** examines author's voice markers cross-generically in academic and non-academic book reviews. The author's starting point is the assumption that each subgenre presents a different contextual configuration in terms of prospective audience and participant relationship, which influences the rhetoric of the text. The frequency and discourse function of features such as first person pronouns and possessives, parenthetical forms, and attitudinal and opinion markers, which reflect the reviewer's stance towards propositions, are analysed cross-generically in the field of literary studies. Her results indicate that first person pronouns are the most frequent author's voice markers in both corpora. As for their discourse function, the author concludes that a variety of rhetorical functions fulfilled by author's voice markers are displayed, including an evaluative comment, either praising or critical, and an indication of a particular preference of the reviewer when appraising the book. In conclusion, Gea-Valor's study provides further evidence that author's voice markers are an important interpersonal strategy as they help reviewers reveal their own persona in the text and show engagement with the audience.

Academic book reviews is also the focus of analysis of **Ana Moreno** and **Lorena Suárez's** article, this time approached from an English-Spanish cross-cultural perspective. The understanding of critical comments on the book under review as potential face-threatening acts lead the authors to investigate the redress mechanisms that commonly serve reviewers to mitigate the force of the face-threatening act potentially caused, i.e. giving reasons for evaluative comment. Comparable corpora of English and Spanish academic journal book reviews of literature are

explored yielding interesting cross-cultural results, among which the authors highlight the more frequent presence of unjustified critical comments in the Spanish texts and the tendency of English-speaking reviewers to justify negative critical comments and of Spanish reviewers to justify the positive ones. In the light of these results, the authors suggest that the constituents of “good face” may be culturally determined insofar as scholars give reasons for critical comments in academic book reviews.

Part III of the book, “**Presenting results: Research articles**”, encompasses articles whose focus of study is the academic genre par excellence. The purpose and perspective are, however, different in each of them. **Ruth Breeze** presents an analysis of the writer presence as manifested by the use of personal pronouns, and of research, discourse and cognition reporting verbs in a corpus of research article introductions in political communication, a discipline whose discursal and generic conventions have not received much scholarly attention so far. Based on her corpus-based results, the author shows that discourse verbs are proportionally more commonly chosen to describe the actions of other authors, whereas research verbs tend to be used more commonly when describing the authors’ own activities. This implies that the RA writers adopt an agentive role, whereas previous authors are assigned a discursive role, which can help the former stress their active contribution to the body of accepted knowledge. Drawing on these findings, Breeze proposes a heuristic for writing introductions, which could be of great relevance to teachers of academic writing for providing guidance to scholars in this discipline.

In **Turo Hiltunen**’s article, existential *there*, as a potentially interpersonal feature, is analysed in research articles from four disciplines (i.e. medicine, physics, law, and literary criticism). His analysis focuses both on the use of this syntactic feature in each discipline as well as on its phraseology, paying special attention to the choice of verb, tense, use of modals, polarity. Although the structure is present in the four disciplines, it is more commonly used in the research articles in medicine and law. The author argues that the reasons for its higher frequency in these two disciplines are different; whereas its high rate of inclusion in the law texts may be due to its role as a “signpost” throughout the long and structurally complex texts to make them more coherent and readable to the audience, its high rate of inclusion in the medicine texts may rather be the consequence of a clear, structured presentation of specific results. Hiltunen’s findings further show that the phraseology of the existential *there* construction is also driven by the discourse function that the construction performs in each of the disciplines under study.

The third chapter in Part III, by **Hildegard Resinger**, offers a cross-cultural exploration of positioning expressions—understood as the discursual encoding of the degree of certainty, probability or assumption expressed by the authors of the texts—in the discussion section of scientific research articles from ecology in English, German and Spanish. The author presents her own taxonomy of positioning expressions and applies it to her own multilingual corpus. Resinger's results reveal different lengths of the discussion sections across the three comparable corpora, the longest being in the English texts and the shortest in the Spanish ones. Her results further show that Spanish scholars do not only assign less space to discussing results but also that they include remarkably fewer positioning expressions than their English or German peers. While the three sub-corpora show that the greatest number of positioning expressions belong to the probability type, a difference is found in the extent to which compulsion positioning expressions (i.e. certainty) are used, a significantly higher frequency being found in the texts in German. The difference in the frequency of use of these expressions clearly influences the presentation of conclusions and the way these are perceived by readers, which seems to be particular to each of the three linguistic contexts in this discipline.

Agnès Tutin authors the last chapter in this section devoted to the analysis of research articles. Her focus of analysis are evaluative adjectives as clear exponents of the argumentative and persuasive forces in academic writing. Her study takes a cross-disciplinary approach based on a corpus of French research articles in economics and linguistics. Tutin finds that axiological (i.e. subjective) adjectives are less frequent than non-axiological evaluative adjectives in the two disciplines. They are, nevertheless, more common in research articles in economics, which points to the greater importance of authorial self-promotion in this discipline. She further analyses adjective and noun collocations and reports that certain recurrent associations are often cross-disciplinary, exhibiting strong selectional restriction.

Part IV, "**Writing around research: Genres in the periphery**", comprises articles dealing with academic genres which, compared to the ones discussed in the previous sections, have received little attention in the literature. These include referee reports, popularisations, academic weblogs, case reports, student essays and conference handouts. The authors of the first chapter in this section, **Inmaculada Fortanet-Gómez** and **Miguel Ruiz-Garrido**, study the use of three key interpersonal devices which can help authors project their stance in the text, namely boosters, hedges, and attitude markers, adopting a cross-disciplinary and a

cross-generic perspective. In their analysis, the authors focus on the incidence and use of these metadiscourse devices in two subcorpora of referee reports from the fields of linguistics and business organisation, and then go on to contrast their results with a similar corpus of research articles. Their results indicate that while authors in the two disciplines tend to use the same lexical realizations to express the interpersonal strategies under analysis, there are significant differences in the incidence and distribution of boosters and hedges across disciplines. In addition, they found that the incidence of attitudinal language is much higher in referee reports than in research articles, a difference which may be accounted for by the more subjective and evaluative nature of these text types.

Isabel Herrando-Rodrigo offers an inter-generic study of the use of two interpersonal features, self-mentions and engagement markers, which enable authors to project themselves and their audience in the text. Her contrastive analysis focuses on a corpus of research articles in urology and a comparable corpus of what she terms “electronic popularizations” in that discipline, all of them dealing with the same topic (i.e. hypospadias). The author uses informal interviews with specialist informants in order to complement and interpret the quantitative data obtained by corpus analysis. The results obtained suggest that RA writers seek to claim authorship and become visible and therefore tend to project their voice by means of exclusive first person plural nouns. In contrast, when writing popularisations authors adapt to the different purpose and audience of these texts and resort more often to engagement devices in order to draw the audience into the text. In brief, the results emphasize the determining function of context in the use of engagement and authorial devices.

In the third chapter in this section **Alon Lischinsky** addresses titling practices in popular management books. The author adopts a constructivist perspective for an analysis of the semantic and pragmatic strategies which writers use when writing their titles. In line with this view of the text as embedded in its pragmatic context, Lischinsky claims that titles cannot be assumed to mirror the semantic content of the text they precede, inasmuch as content reported by a title can be interpreted very differently depending on the audience’s background and interests. The study presented here tries to demonstrate that writers are able to strategically take into account these contextual aspects in different ways when writing their titles. More specifically, titling practices in popular management books allow the writers to echo the ideology and power relations which exist in the particular contexts in which these texts exist.

María José Luzón offers an innovative analysis of social presence in a recent and rapidly developing genre: academic weblogs. The research she

presents examines the purposes for which the blog is used and the participants' relational behaviour towards one another, as well as the extent to which these two aspects are linked to the status of the blogger. For this purpose, Luzón analyses a corpus of 15 academic blogs from authors with different relative status (tenured professors, assistant and associate professors and PhD students) using an adapted version of Rourke et al's (2001) taxonomy of indicators of social presence. Her study clearly illustrates that language contributes to establishing, maintaining and strengthening relationships in academic communication. In addition, her results confirm that academics of different status tend to engage in blogging for different purposes and to establish different types of relations with disciplinary colleagues.

In the next chapter, **Magdalena Murawska** analyses impersonality with respect to agency and patient presentation in a corpus of 50 medical case reports. Essentially, the author seeks to clarify whether the more objective and impersonal biomedical model for research—reasoning and presentation of knowledge—still underlies writing practices in the medical discipline, or less objective and more patient-centred models of medicine are adopted in the text. To do this, she examines patient visibility in the fragments of the text where diseases, processes, symptoms or treatments are presented as well as the author's degree of detachment when describing research procedures and results. Her study suggests that the biomedical model for research prioritising impersonality and objectivity over personal involvement (both of researcher and patient) is still dominant in this discipline.

The article by **Bojana Petrić** offers an exploration of the conceptions of voice held by student writers. As the author points out, students often find it difficult to comply with their teachers' demands to insert clearly their own authorial voice in their essays and they rarely receive instruction or specific guidelines as to how to project voice. In the research reported in this chapter, Petrić used semi-structured interviews with 30 Master students to investigate the way they conceptualise writer's voice. The results presented indicate that even though student writers generally viewed voice as a very relevant concept, their conceptions were inconsistent. The diversity of conceptions of voice among students found in this study may be accounted for by the existing lack of consensus about voice in the literature and by extension, among writing teachers and supervisors.

The last chapter in the book presents research by **Tatyana Yakhontova** and **Svitlana Markelova** on a marginal genre which has received little attention in the literature: the conference handout. Textual

and interpersonal features are analysed in a corpus of 200 conference handouts in applied linguistics, and ethnographic data are drawn from questionnaires targeting the users of these texts. Using a number of textual aspects such as content, use of visuals or length, among others, the authors are able to identify three types of conference handout: informative, indicative and illustrative. Moreover, the use of interpersonal features such as self-mention markers and hedges is shown to be related to the type of conference handout at stake and to its dominant communicative purpose.

In sum, all the contributions approach a common theme, that of interpersonality in academic written discourse, but from a variety of angles and perspectives, which provides a rich view on a field of growing research interest.

PART I

INTERPERSONALITY AT WORK

CHAPTER ONE

INTERPERSONALITY IN WRITTEN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: THREE ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES¹

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Abstract

Academic writing is now generally viewed as a social endeavour where readers play an active role in the validation of the knowledge claims put forward by academic authors. A lot of research in English for Academic Purposes has focused on the ways authors adapt their discourse to their audience in an attempt to influence their reactions to the text. A great deal of research has been devoted to analysing the interpersonal interactions present in academic texts, as well as to how this interpersonal component is exploited across different contexts of publication. The InterLAE research group has contributed to this body of research through the study of interpersonal features in written academic texts adopting a

¹ We are indebted to the local educational authorities (*Diputación General de Aragón*, Ref. 245-122) for funding the research group InterLAE, and to the *Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación* for funding the projects “El inglés y la ciencia: la voz del autor en la expresión y difusión del conocimiento científico. Análisis contrastivo de los recursos lingüísticos de la valoración en un corpus de textos académicos (HUM2005-03646)” and “La integridad genérica en la comunicación académica y profesional: los géneros y su correlación con las prácticas discursivas y con la cultura de distintas comunidades profesionales (FFI2009-09792)”.

cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary perspective of analysis and, also more recently, a cross-generic orientation.

A comparable corpus was created to allow a multiperspective analysis of academic texts: the Spanish English Research Article Corpus (SERAC), which currently consists of 576 RAs from a wide range of disciplines. The corpus is divided into three comparable subcorpora: (i) RAs published in English by native speakers in prestigious international publications, (ii) RAs published in English in the same international publications by Spanish writers, and (iii) RAs published in Spanish by Spanish authors in national publications.

The corpus analysis of the texts was performed both electronically (Wordsmith Tools 4.0) and manually, yielding significant quantitative data and hypotheses regarding the use of interpersonal resources in research articles. Our corpus-based results were interpreted in the light of the ethnographic data obtained from interviews with specialist informants from each of the fields of study. In this paper, we present some of the most significant results and conclusions drawn from our study.

Remarkable differences were found in the ways authors project their voice in academic texts and how this voice is shaped in the interaction between the authors and their audience across both different disciplines as well as socio-cultural and pragmatic contexts. These differences could be interpreted in the light of a number of epistemological and social factors which define each particular discipline and culture, such as the peculiarities of their process of knowledge construction, their degree of competitiveness and consensus, or the relationship among scholars as well as between these and the external community of practitioners. Moreover, factors such as the context of publication and the relative size of the audience have also been shown to influence the incidence of interpersonal resources, as well as their preferred uses in academic texts.

1. Interpersonality in academic discourse

With the emergence of English as the international language of academia, in the last few decades a great amount of work has been devoted to the development of courses and materials that could cater for the needs of non-native speakers using English to study, teach or do research. Studies within the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) have been designed to produce instructional materials, as well as investigate the particular needs and practices of groups of learners within the academic world.

Over the years, EAP research has focused on a wide number of issues and subjects related to the different genres present in academic communication, such as the particular rhetorical structure of research articles (RAs) (Swales 1981, 1990; Hopkins and Dudley-Evans 1988; Brett 1994; Holmes 1997; Williams 1999; *inter alia*) and of abstracts (Salager-Meyer 1992; Lorés-Sanz 2004); on the role and structure of grammatical subjects and the thematic structure of RAs (Gosden 1992); on the use of nominalizations and nominal groups (Guillén 1998; Halliday 1998); on the functions of long subject noun phrases (Vande Kopple 1994) and other collocational structures involving the subject (Master 1991; Luzón 2000); or on the use of the passive voice in scientific RAs (Tarone et al. 1981; Wilkinson 1992; Espinoza 1997, *inter alia*).

Yet, in addition to these rhetorical and functional analyses of linguistic features, EAP literature has taken a great interest in the research of other features of academic writing illustrating its interactive and interpersonal nature. A case in point is the extensive research which in the last two decades has been carried out on interpersonal aspects of academic texts such as hedging (see for example Butler 1990; Salager-Meyer 1994; Hyland 1996, 1998; Crompton 1997; Lewin 1998, 2005; Vassileva 2001 or Lafuente Millán 2008), writer presence (Vassileva 1998; Kuo 1999; Hyland 2001a, 2002a, 2002c; Breivega et al. 2002; Martínez 2005; Harwood 2005a, 2005b, Lorés-Sanz 2006a; Mur-Dueñas 2007a), engagement markers (Thompson 2001; Hyland 2001b, 2002b, 2002d; Giltrow 2005; Mur-Dueñas 2008) and evaluative markers (Swales and Burke 2003; Stotesbury 2003).

The huge attention devoted to the study of the interpersonal dimension in academic discourse can be related to the impact that social constructionist theories have had on the way we perceive scientific texts. Traditionally, scientific writing has been regarded as the objective report of scientific facts derived from the correct application of research procedures. However, following social construction theories, there is more to writing an RA than merely using words to represent an external objective piece of data. Reality is considered to be constructed socially, as nature has no language of her own in which she can speak to us (Toulmin 1972, 5), and therefore there is no secure means of distinguishing between objective observation and subjective inference.

These views have significant implications for research writing because, if research results are open to subjective interpretation, it can be assumed that readers play an active role in accepting or rejecting the claims and conclusions put forward by academic authors, and particularly by authors of an RA (Hyland 1999). Accordingly, rather than simply transmitting

objective information, academic writers have to take into account their readers and try to influence their reactions to the text. More particularly, scholars hoping to publish their research need to enact certain interpersonal rhetorical resources in their texts in order to persuade the readers of the validity of the writers' interpretations and to facilitate its publication.

1.1. Previous theoretical frameworks

As discussed above, a large amount of research has been devoted to investigating the use of interpersonal strategies in academic writing. Nevertheless, many of these studies have limited their scope to specific rhetorical features, like, for example, hedges, emphasisers, evaluative markers, engagement markers or personal pronouns, thereby providing a fractional account of the use of these interpersonal devices. In addition, several attempts have been made to provide an articulated descriptive model that could account for the expression of attitude and evaluation in discourse. Biber and Finegan (1989) proposed the framework of *stance* to describe the lexical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgements or commitment concerning the propositional content of the message. Later reformulations of the model of stance have tried to broaden its scope to include other interpersonal phenomena, such as direct address to the reader, writers' self-mentions (Hyland 1999), and *style stance*, language indicating how something is said or written (Conrad and Biber 2001). Similar models of attitudinal and evaluative meanings in discourse have been developed by Hunston (1993, 1994) and Thompson and Hunston (2001) around the concept of *evaluation*. Thompson and Hunston (2001) use this concept as a "superordinate term" comprising two components: attitude and modality, and therefore conceptualise it as a close equivalent of *stance* as originally defined by Biber and Finegan (op. cit.). In contrast to the stance and evaluation frameworks discussed above, some scholars have dealt with epistemic meaning as separate from attitude meaning. This approach is taken by Martin (2001) and Martin and Rose (2003), whose model of *appraisal* identifies *graduation of attitudes* and *engagement* (also called *source*) as spheres of interpersonal activity which supplement the attitudinal component described in previous models.

All these frameworks share a focus on the expression of different types of attitude as the key feature of interpersonal meaning. Yet, the adoption of attitude and evaluation as their core notions constrains the scope and coherence of these models, as these concepts relate to a wide variety of overlapping and blurred areas like the expression of emotion, value,

modality, amplification, focus, engagement with reader, manipulation, politeness, etc. Nevertheless, they are very useful insofar as they identify and describe a range of expressions of interpersonal meaning that can be incorporated to a more comprehensive framework that is able to provide an integrated account of the use of these and other interpersonal rhetorical resources.

1.2. Metadiscourse and the InterLAE research group

The concept of *metadiscourse* is the central notion around which a number of integrated frames of interpersonal meaning have been grouped (see for example Vande Kopple 1985; Crismore et al. 1993; Mauranen 1993; Hyland 1998, 1999, 2000, 2005a, 2005b; Ädell 2006). Although there have been many different attempts to define the term, the InterLAE research group have typically adopted Hyland's (2005a: 37) view of metadiscourse as "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community". According to Hyland's model (2005a) all metadiscourse can contribute to the interpersonal dimension of a text. Nevertheless, he identifies two classes of metadiscourse categories: *interactive* resources, which help the writer or speaker organize the information presented in ways that the audience may find coherent and convincing, and *interactional* resources, which helps involve the readers and alert them to the author's perspective on propositional information or on the readers themselves. Hyland (2005a) establishes five broad sub-categories of interactive metadiscourse: transition markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses, as well as five types of interactional metadiscourse resources: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mention and engagement markers.

The frame of metadiscourse provides us with a comprehensive tool to investigate and account for a wide number of rhetorical strategies designed to shape the interpersonal relationship between the writer and his audience. Nevertheless, this model is not without limitations. Just as was the case with other models outlined above, using metadiscourse as the framework for the study and interpretation of interpersonal rhetorical strategies entails restricting the scope of analysis to explicit lexico-grammatical features, even though it is acknowledged that authors can manoeuvre interpersonally by means of clausal elements, as well as by using stretches of discourse longer than the sentence. In addition, in our view, the complex array of interweaving pragmatic functions cannot be mapped out

nor fully covered by any set of discrete categories. As a result, it is our argument that a more encompassing framework needs to be developed in future studies for the exploration of the way writers exploit the interpersonal dimension in academic texts.

2. Contrastive approaches to the study of academic texts

2.1. Interpersonality across small and big cultures

As it is generally acknowledged, academics belong to different discourse communities which shape their discursive and rhetorical choices when communicating their research. Their membership to particular disciplinary or cultural academic communities influences their writing choices, which should aim to meet their peers' beliefs, values and expectations. The notion of discourse community, thus, enables the understanding of genres as social actions rather than just as language (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995). Texts produced by academics within their communities are envisioned as exponents of the discursive and social practices of the group members, who interact and share common understandings and values. As members of the same community or "tribe" (Becher and Trowler 2001) academics share research topics, understandings, values and goals; thus, being part of a given community determines academics' ways of enquiry, methodologies and epistemologies.

The influence of disciplinary communities on academic genres in general, and on the use of interpersonal features within these genres in particular, has been extensively documented within EAP. Numerous analyses have shown how disciplinary values, beliefs, knowledge and expectations shared by their members constrain their writing practices (e.g. Varttala 1999, 2001; Hyland 2000, 2005a; Vold 2006; Dahl 2008; Lafuente-Millán 2008; Afros and Schryer 2009). In addition, the broader context of production, influenced by the language of publication chosen and the consequent readership addressed (local vs. international), has similarly been shown to determine academics' strategic writing choices (Breivega et al. 2002; Burgess 2002; Yakhontova 2002, 2006; Dahl 2003, 2004, this volume; Martín Martín and Burgess 2004; Martín Martín 2005; Fløttum, Dahl and Kinn 2006; Fløttum, Kinn and Dahl 2006; Lorés-Sanz 2006a, 2008; Koutsantoni 2007; Mur-Deñás 2007a, 2007b, 2008; Moreno and Suárez 2008; Moreno, this volume; Bellés-Fortuño and Querol-Julián, this volume; Gotti, this volume; Resinger, this volume).

The distinction between these two perspectives of analysis has been problematised by Atkinson (2004), who refers to them as "small" and

“big” cultures. Following Holliday (1999), he offers a more complex conceptualization of culture(s), according to which an individual can be a member of several small cultures in one or several big cultures. The important point is that small (e.g. professional, academic, student, etc.) cultures (partly) overlap with big (e.g. national) cultures. That is, the norms, values and conventions of one of the small cultures will overlap (though not necessarily entirely) with those of the big culture. Accordingly, only in the light of the interaction between small and large cultures can we get more precise insights into writers’ rhetorical choices with a view to exploring and understanding educational, academic or professional settings.

A few studies have combined both the cross-disciplinary and the cross-cultural perspectives. This is especially the case of the research carried out by the KIAP (<http://kiap.uib.no/index-e.htm>) and CERLIS (<http://dinamico.unibg.it/cerlis/>) research groups as well as by the InterLAE group (<http://www.interlae.com>). These double perspectives of analysis can provide a more comprehensive picture of the linguistic and disciplinary cultures concerning academics’ writing. In fact, combining both analytical perspectives offers a fuller account of the contextual factors shaping the writing of academic genres.

2.2. Interpersonality across genres

The influence of small and big cultures upon rhetorical choices in academic writing is crucial, as outlined in the previous section. Nevertheless, there is a further determining factor influencing the use of interpersonality features in academic texts, and that is genre. Genres respond to particular communicative purposes; they are shaped by the participants taking part in a particular situation and by the goals they hope to achieve, and thus become instances of social events (Swales 1990, 2004; Bhatia 1993, 2004). As such, they transcend disciplinary and national cultures. The different communicative purposes to which genres are put clearly impinge on the writer’s relationship with the text and with the readers.

In their need to respond to different communicative purposes in their academic contexts, scholars engage in the production of different genres. Some of these have in common an overarching goal and thus may be seen as part of a chain (Swales 2004), or as a constellation (Bhatia 2004) of genres to be necessarily mastered by academics in their professional activity. Genres are seen as dynamic constructs, which evolve in response to new communicative needs and events (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995).

This dynamism can result in processes of genre hybridization or colonization, which entail the appropriation of characteristic features from other genres. Awareness of these interdiscursive practices is essential for academics to successfully negotiate meaning with their peers.

It is a fact that the cross-generic perspective of analysis in EAP has not received as much scholarly attention as the cross-disciplinary or the cross-cultural, which may be due to the widely acknowledged character of genres as not “fixed, monolithic and unchanging” (Hyland 2005a, 88). They respond to changing sociocognitive needs which vary with time and contexts, thus problematizing any attempt at contrastive exploration: genres would need to be defined and described before any comparisons were made. Perhaps the most consistently explored area has been the comparison between RAs (mainly medical texts) and popularizations in the same field, initiated by Nwogu (1990). Nwogu analyzed the rhetorical structure and the cohesive devices in three generic contexts of medical knowledge production: the RA abstract, the RA proper and its popularized version, showing that subject matter is not the only determining factor for generic rhetorical differences, but that other variables, such as purpose, audience, or medium of discourse play a role in the characterization of genres. Some subsequent research has been carried out on the intergeneric contrast between RAs and popularizations in the field of medicine, focusing for instance on the exploration of the ideational grammatical metaphor (Guillén 1996), and on self-mentions and engagement markers (Herrando-Rodrigo, this volume).

From a broader disciplinary perspective, Hyland (2009, 2010) has contributed to the cross-generic approach by contrasting the professional and popular dissemination of science from the new angle of “proximity”, a core notion which stresses the interpersonal character of scientific exchange. Other cross-generic analyses include, for instance, the exploration of the contrast between the conference abstract, the corresponding conference presentation and the subsequent published paper (Vassileva 2006), which involve both the written and the spoken mode. These and other studies might certainly contribute to providing a wider and more comprehensive account of the sociocognitive realities which, under the shape of genres, cut across disciplines and linguistic cultures.