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Pattern and particularity in a pedagogical genre: the case of an individual teacher

Abstract

The pedagogical focus of many genre studies in the field of applied linguistics has produced a wealth of materials designed to raise students' awareness of the purposes, rhetorical structures, linguistic features, and contexts associated with particular educational genres. The desire to pin down the key characteristics of these genres has also resulted in a conceptualization of genres as rather more stable and constraining/normative than is the case in other disciplines such as literary studies and linguistic anthropology. In this chapter, we report on a rhetorical genre-based analysis of a spoken classroom event in the discipline of architecture - an event that was identified in the current study as both recurrent and patterned. As in many genre studies in the field of applied linguistics, we sought to characterize of the genre for teaching and learning purposes. Less usual was the case study approach adopted here, focusing on one teacher and his use of this classroom genre. A case study approach allowed us to explore the pattern and variability in the teacher's improvisational pedagogical style. More generally, we want to argue that a study of particularity (in this case of one teacher's use of a classroom genre) has the potential to contribute to a broader understanding of genre and generic boundaries. The chapter concludes by discussing the pedagogical implications of individual variation as well as underlining the need for a concept of genre in applied linguistics that allows a space to consider the tension between stability and creativity in language use.

Introduction

The design studio has a privileged position in the discipline of architecture. It refers to both the subject that is a mandatory part of each semester's studies in the architecture degree, and the physical space where students create design artifacts in response to a brief set by the studio teacher. In the studio, students are required to integrate the knowledge they have learnt in other architecture subjects, including history, theory and technology – it is thus seen as a culmination of teaching and learning in architecture education. The studio is further privileged in that it mediates between the academy and the profession. Evidence of this is found in the current debates in architecture pedagogy, which focus on the effectiveness of the studio component in preparing students for a rapidly changing profession (e.g. Mewburn, 2009; Webster, 2007).

Previous research in architecture education (e.g. Webster, 2007) and in English for Specific Purposes (see Swales, Barks, Ostermann & Simpson, 2001) has focused on the end-of-semester or end-of-year presentation and review of student designs, a traumatic event for many students because of the presence of external assessors and

the often harsh critique of designs. The purpose of such research has been to understand the criteria design teachers use to judge effective presentations. The current study explores instead the weekly reviews in which the process of design is shaped. In these weekly reviews, students present their in-progress designs represented by artifacts such as models and drawings, and teachers guide students through the process of design by for example, identifying design problems and suggesting solutions. In the studio observed for the current study, these reviews dominated class time, with each student participating in a review of their work at least ten times over the 12-week semester. In the architecture discourse community, these weekly reviews are indigenously referred to as 'desk crits' to distinguish them from the 'crits' or critiques at the end of semester. Following Miller and Shepherd (2004), the fact that in the architecture community this routine communicative event is known by a common name - the desk crit - suggests that it is operating as a genre.

In this rhetorical genre-based research, we took a case study approach focusing on how the desk crit was used by a very experienced design teacher, who we will call Anton. Within the broad constraints of the desk crit, it is clear that what mattered in Anton's studio were flexible and creative ways of solving design problems. As we demonstrate in this chapter, Anton's improvisation took the form of flexible and contingent responses tailored to students' individual projects. It also took the form of (verbal) creativity as a fundamental way of generating design solutions. Our argument is that a case study of Anton and the ways he responds to student designs – what we identify as his improvisational pedagogical style - tells us something important about the variability that is intrinsic to this pedagogical genre and about the genre's boundaries. It is important we think for students to be aware of this variability and of how it reflects the broader culture of the design studio community in which individuality and creativity are highly prized social values.

Theoretically, the conceptualization of genre that we required in this study was one that provides a space to discuss empirical events that are clearly variable, dynamic and unpredictable. As we show in the next section, this is somewhat at odds with how the concept of genre has developed in applied linguistics, where it has arguably become increasingly solidified because of its close link to pedagogy.

The use of *genre* in applied linguistics

In this section, we provide an overview of how the concept of genre has been used in applied linguistics. In this necessarily brief overview, we narrow the focus to a comparison of two closely related dimensions that differentiate traditions of genre; namely, what is selected for analysis and what pedagogical imperatives are served (cf. Freadman, 2012). We follow Flowerdew (2002) in distinguishing the three main traditions of genre - English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the Sydney School based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) – according to whether their approach to pedagogy is more linguistically-oriented or more-contextually-oriented.

The linguistically-oriented genre traditions - English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the so-called Sydney School – both emerged in response to a perceived need to overcome disadvantage. For the former, this was linguistic disadvantage amongst international or non-English background students studying in English language universities (Swales, 1990); for the latter it was educational disadvantage amongst school children from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Feez, 2002). Both traditions of genre theorise systematic connections between linguistic features and the function or communicative purpose of texts in social contexts. In both traditions, there is also a belief that students acquire the necessary genres through the explicit teaching of these 'systematic connections' and of patterns of rhetorical structure and lexico-grammatical forms. For the Sydney School, the selected texts are mostly those relevant to primary and secondary school children - 'elemental' genres such as narrative and description. For ESP, the texts are research articles and literature reviews or more specialized genres such as sociology essays and legal briefs.

Despite underlying understandings of genre as encompassing variation[1], the focus on explicit teaching in the linguistically-oriented genre traditions has pushed genre studies in the direction of regularity. Corpus linguistics, for example, has contributed to genre analysis in ESP through large-scale electronic collection of disciplinary texts, allowing for systematic searches of textual patterning (see for example work done by Hyland, 2002, 2004). A wealth of pedagogical materials and indeed whole curricula

[1] An example here is the discussion in the field of English for Specific Purposes around texts being more or less prototypical (see e.g. Swales, 1990).

have been developed from such genre analyses with the aim of teaching students the purposes, rhetorical structures, linguistics features, and contexts associated with educational genres. For critics, a consequence of this focus on generic homogeneity has been a tendency towards the 'fixing' of genre in detailed textual artifacts, obscuring variation within genres and potentially constraining innovation. While this is not considered a central problem within the ESP tradition, ESP scholars such as John Swales (e.g. Swales et al., 2001) have indirectly addressed this issue by drawing attention to whether we encourage students to accommodate or critique the genres of their disciplines.

A more contextually-oriented approach to genre is represented by scholars working within a New Rhetoric or Rhetorical Genre Studies framework. These scholars see genre in terms of typified forms of social action that occur in response to situations perceived as recurrent (Miller, 1994) – in other words a shift away from textual regularities to the relationship between recurrent actions and contextual regularities. A concern of scholars aligned with this tradition of genre has been the transition from university to work, with tasks in the two domains being characterized as "worlds apart" (Dias, Freedman, Medway & Paré, 1999). Because of their preoccupation with rhetorical situations, these scholars have often included in their analyses the activities and processes that surround the production and interpretation of texts.

The rhetorical genre tradition has not had as strong a pedagogical focus as that of the linguistically-oriented genre traditions. For many rhetorical genre scholars, the explicit teaching of form-function relations is viewed as a form of prescriptivism[2]. The problems that a rhetorical account of genre poses for genre pedagogy were raised as far back as 1994 by Aviva Freedman when she noted that genre knowledge – understood in this tradition as how genre responds to social, cultural and rhetorical features of contexts - is largely tacit, difficult for experts to articulate, and learnt through participation in authentic tasks, rather than in classroom simulations. Genre-inspired pedagogy within a rhetorical framework has thus focused more on consciousness-raising of rhetorical features (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010), with the teacher's role one of generating "facilitative environments" rather than explicit

[2] Although as Frances Christie (1993) points out, explicit accounts of genre are not in themselves prescriptive; it is how they are used in the classroom that leads to prescriptivism or not.

instruction (Freedman, 1994, p. 200; see also Hunt, 1994). Perhaps because many rhetorical genre scholars have kept pedagogy at arms length, and because of a focus on processes as well as products, there is a sense that rhetorical accounts of genre reflect a more dynamic and open-ended phenomenon than do linguistically-oriented accounts (see for example, Catherine Schryer's (1993) characterization of genres as "stabilized-for-now or stabilized enough sites of social and ideological action" (1993, p.200).

Irrespective of the tradition or pedagogical orientation, one can argue that in applied linguistics the concept of genre has tended to be used in ways that give too much attention to pattern and stability and too little to individual variation and the unpredictability that is an inevitable part of the dynamic unfolding of events. Pennycook (2010) identifies the problem as one of incommensurability between abstract accounts of genre as systematic regularities and language as it is used at a local level. He sees static fixed descriptions of texts as a limitation of genre-based approaches *per se,* with the construct of genre too "often pulled in the direction of similarity" (p.126), and resultant texts too often "frozen in time" (p.117). In this chapter, we question whether this limitation is integral to the concept of genre or whether the problem lies as John Frow (2006) proposes with analysts who "look for a continuity and permanence that it is not in the nature of genres to offer" (p. 134). Thus, we retain the concept of genre, but following scholars like Anne Freadman (2012), we look for ways that it can encompass activities that are clearly dynamic and open-ended. We turn now to a description of the current study including a brief account of the patterned nature of the desk crit (see Morton (2013) for an extended description of the linguistic and rhetorical patterns in this genre). The focus of the chapter is on the variation we found in the enactment of this genre by one design studio teacher.

The study

This chapter reports on part of a larger research project on postgraduate design studio pedagogy (Morton, 2013). The research site for the project was a School of Architecture in a large Australian university. More specifically, the study looked at the activities in a postgraduate design studio class taught by a senior academic, Anton, over a 12-week semester. For the larger project, multiple sources of data associated

with the studio were collected, including observations and field notes of studio sessions, documents relating to the studios, video/audio-recordings and transcripts of studio sessions, as well as interviews with the design teacher Anton and a number of his students. In this chapter, we draw from a range of these data sources. The research focused on the weekly studio sessions. These sessions were held in a large room, with Anton and up to 15 students sitting around a sizeable rectangular table, upon which were placed students' notebooks, architectural drawings, models, coffee cups and so on.

As previously established, the main pedagogical genre enacted in the weekly sessions was the desk crit, which functioned both as an evaluation of student's in-progress work and a guide to the process of design. The opening of each desk crit was marked by Anton's selection of the next student and the student's placement of their artifacts on the table directly in front of Anton. The crits began not as we might expect with the presenting student verbally explaining their design artifacts, but with Anton's response to the student's work (as demonstrated below) in the form of speaking aloud his interpretations and evaluations of the design. This initial appraisal was typically followed with Anton problematising design issues particular to each student's design and by giving advice and instruction about future work. Thus the reviews provided students with repeated opportunities to experience how an expert responded to their designs and the designs of their peers as well as repeated exposure to Anton's expectations and criteria for evaluation, including a very practical demonstration of what he valued in architectural design. The closure of the desk crits was typically marked by Anton pushing the artifacts back towards the presenting student.

The excerpt below is the opening of Anton's review of one of his students' designs from week six. The task that students were set in this design studio was to design five buildings that related to each other in a specific composition. In the following excerpt, the student Verne has positioned his models of five buildings onto a site plan and pushed them towards Anton, the teacher, who then begins his initial appraisal.

(Excerpt 1: *Anton: Teacher; Verne: Student*)

1	Anton	one one two three four five okay
2		(0.9)
3		a::h this'd be sensational if this was built wouldn't it

4 people would come from miles around to have a look at this
5 [((*turning site plan around*))
6 [okay but I have to a:::h that's very interesting
7 when you look down the street this looks like it might be one building
8 Verne yeah
9 Anton yeah
10 Verne [((*nodding his head*))
11 Anton [yeah and [yet it's not
12 [((*looking up at Cara*))
13 okay now as much as I say in your case Cara
14 where there is symmetry it looks like one building
15 XX here it looks like one building but I think it's okay
16 see its ((*shaking his head*))
17 this is why I use the word maybe a lot yea::h
18 [((*bends down until his head is parallel with the model*))
19 [but not if you're looking from here
20 well actually this is the seagulls' view anyway
21 [((*turning site model around*))
22 [but certainly if you were to walk walk along here ((*pointing*))
23 you would see these were different buildings
24 (1.4)
25 a::::h certainly from the front
26 that's interesting

What this initial appraisal shows is an attempt by the teacher Anton to read his student's artifacts. This interpretative process involves Anton holding the site plan in his hands, physically interacting with it by turning it around to view it from different angles, lowering his head at one stage so that it is parallel with the models, and speaking his thoughts aloud in long, uninterrupted turns. In this excerpt, our attention is drawn to the moment-by-moment unfolding of Anton's appraisal. When Anton himself described this process in an interview with the researcher, he talked of how he was "in this area of unknown … trying to discover what it is, what it is that's happening, what is about to happen" (Anton:62[3]). The dynamic and unpredictable nature of the interaction as Anton describes it, and the spontaneity of his response to the artifacts can be seen in his false starts and self-repairs (lines 4 and 9). These reflect moments of recognition as he looks and then sees some aspect of the composition of the design models in a new or different way.

Anton's improvisational pedagogical style

When asked to describe his teaching style, Anton noted that while he went into each class with a general sense of what he might do (based on the stage students were at in

[3] Anton:62 represents Anton's 62nd turn in his interviews with the researcher.

the design process), how the class unfolded was largely determined by the problems that arose in his moment-by-moment review of individual student work. Anton expressed this in terms of risk-taking:

> *I have to say the whole business of teaching is fraught with um what do I say. I go into these classes and I think 'Oh shit what can I do now?' 'What can we do now?' 'What will we do here?' There's risk, put it that way. There's risk, but it's this risk that keeps me interested in teaching.* (Anton:48)

The 'risk' Anton talks of here is 'captured' in what we characterize as his improvisatory pedagogical style. Anton's improvisatory style took the form of flexible and contingent responses to the problems he identified in his appraisals of student designs. In exploring solutions, Anton drew upon a wide range of rhetorical strategies. These included brainstorming, short stories, collaborative play, casual conversation, discussion of precedents, mitigated advice, and direct instructions[4]. Anton's improvisatory style also took the form of verbal creativity and verbal play as a way of generating design solutions and managing the studio dynamics. Three examples are provided here as illustration. What these examples have in common is that they were signaled by a frame shift (Goffman, 1981[5]), involved humour, and functioned to provide students with opportunities for some sort of heightened engagement in studio activities[6].

The first example is of a 'small story', told by Anton. In this case, the student Johnnie began his presentation by offering a set of stylized drawings involving graphic symbols of his five buildings. After a lengthy interaction between Anton and Johnnie on ways to develop the abstract diagrams into fuller and more detailed representations of the buildings, Anton told the following short story. It is a humorous story; one that functioned to pull the other students into the interaction, to entertain them and to elicit

[4] The variation in the crits in Anton's studio is also shown in a comparison of two crits in Week 6: at 9 minutes 58 seconds, Gem's crit was the shortest, with only two speaking participants (the teacher Anton and the student Gem) and a tight focus on clarifying whether the relationship between her five models was a set or a series. Shari's crit, which was the longest at 29 minutes 57 seconds, more than three times the length of Gem's, included a 19 minute 15 second segment in which seven students and the teacher Anton brainstormed the idea of 'floating'.

[5] For Goffman (1981), the concept of frame is used to signify a context of interpretation, and frames, such as performance or joking, are considered to be communicative resources.

[6] A similar finding was reported by Kamberellis (2001) in his analysis of classroom discourse in primary school settings. Kamberellis concluded that the "genre fragments" that he identified were invoked through frame shifts and provided students with enhanced opportunities for classroom interaction.

their active participation in the form of laughter (lines 5, 11, 14 and 17). The shift from a primarily two-party[7] to a multi-party exchange is signaled by Anton in line 3. Following a pause, Anton looks around the table at the other students, leans back in his chair, and begins the story.

(Excerpt 2: Anton: teacher; Johnnie: Student; Gem: Student)

1	Anton	ok the urban thing still needs to be worked out
2	Johnnie	yep
3	Anton	(1.8) ((*looking around the table, then leaning back in his chair*))
4		wouldn't it be good if you gave the builder a set of drawings like this ((laughing))=
5	Students	=((*laugh*))
6	Anton	on the buildings for Storey Hall[8] the architects said to the builders
7		just put these patterns these little things wherever wherever you want
8		you know random
9		just put them wherever you want
10		and the builders refused
11	Gem	((*laugh*))
12	Anton	they said no we've done that for architects before
13		and they come along and they change it
14	Johnnie	((*laughs*))
15	Anton	you give us a really accurate drawing of what you want
16		so then we don't have to do it twice
17	Students	((*laugh*))
18	Anton	okay so ((*looking at site plan and turning it*)) actually that looks better than it did last week

While on one level Anton's point in this short story is about the need for architectural drawings to provide necessary detail, at another level the builders' inability to cope without watertight instructions is contrasted unfavourably with the architects' creativity and originality, thus underscoring the gap between the two professions. It is unnecessary for Anton to spell this out further. His audience of architecture students shows their appreciation with laughter. In this excerpt, we see Anton ventriloquizing the voices of both the architects (lines 7-9) and in response to the architects, the builders (lines 12-16). Thus the second person pronouns in lines 7-9 index the builders (not the student Johnnie), and the pronouns in lines 12-16 index first the

[7] Following Goffman (1981), the other students in the class were identified as ratified observers in this two-party exchange between the teacher and presenting student.

8 Storey Hall is a building that is part of a university city campus in Melbourne. It was designed by Ashton Ragatt McDougall and built in 1996. It has been said to index among other things, chaos theory, Walter Burley-Griffin, the sexual revolution, feminism, Einstein's grotto, Plato's cave, X and Y chromosomes, the Vault sculpture, paradoxes, contextualism, techno music, and Australian-Irish Melbourne.

builders (we've), and then the architects (they and you), and finally the builders again (we). Following Goffman (1981), we might view Anton's animating of these voices as "distance altering alignments" (p.174). This short story thus functions at a number of different levels. Anton is able to note the need for detailed architectural plans, and the story works at the level of managing classroom dynamics, where it entertains and re-engages the entire class. Just as importantly, this story makes clear the hierarchical relations between architects and builders as part of the socialization of students into a profession where individuality and creativity are highly prized social values.

The other two extracts provided here involve what we have termed 'collaborative play' and come from Mai's presentation in Week 8 and Dan's presentation in Week 6 respectively. In the extract from Mai's presentation, the suggestion by the student Peter that Mai's five buildings are like 'layers' triggers Anton's extended metaphor involving layers of clothing. The frame shift occurs when with a pause and a glance at the student Peter, Anton launches into an extended metaphor (line 6). The students respond with laughter and then Peter joins in and extends the metaphor in a playful way. What develops is an episode of collaborative play that is full of metaphoric language. A number of students engage through laughter and one student Peter embraces the opportunity to participate more actively.

Excerpt 3 (Anton: Teacher; Mai: Student; Peter: Student)

1	Anton	you're really talking about ((*pointing at the five models in turn*)) one two three four five different kinds of infill schemes aren't you
2	Mai	mhmm
3	Anton	or box schemes
4	Peter	like layers you could just say XX
5	Mai	mhmm
6	Anton	layers yes
7		(1.3) ((*looking at Peter*))
8		so ((*pointing at the models in turn*)) this is the nude building here
9		and this is a:::h that's the underwear
10		and this is a:::h a bit of thermal stuff on top
11	Students	((*laugh*))
12	Anton	that's the thermal ((*pointing*))
13		and that's the overcoat ((*pointing*))
14	Mai	((*laugh*)) OK yep
15	Peter	overcoat jacket ((*pointing*))
16	Anton	((*pointing at models in opposite direction*)) overcoat jacket shirt
17		(1.1) ((*looks at Peter*))
18	Peter	underwear [maybe
19	Anton	[underwear
20	Peter	perfume ((*smiles*))=

21	Anton	=perfume
22	Mai	I'm not quite sure [because
23	Peter	[XX ((*smiling*))
24	Students	[((*laughing*))
25	Peter	aftershave=
26	Anton	=aftershave yes that's right
27	Mai	I wanted to introduce the clear one and that one ((pointing))
28		but so all 5 degrees of opacity will be here
29	Anton	a::::h I see what you mean

The second episode of collaborative play is from Dan's crit in Week 6. It begins after a pause when in line 5, Gem interjects with the comment "I'm a bit hungry". This represents a frame shift, and what follows can be seen as collaborative play initiated by Gem, taken up by Anton and engaged in by Shari as well as by many of the other students who laugh several times in this episode. This segment, like that in the previous excerpt is fast paced, with overlapping and latching of utterances suggesting heightened involvement. We have seen that humour is a rhetorical device used by Anton, but it interesting in this case that it is the student Gem who is the initiator. It is also interesting that what Gem is doing here is what Anton does in his initial appraisals – articulating the experience (thoughts and feelings) that the models induce. It is also worth noting again that humorous episodes such as this create opportunities for heightened involvement from students.

Excerpt 4: Anton (Teacher; Dan: Student: Gem, Shari: Students)

1	Anton	yea::h okay
2		((*turning site model around*)) yeah we'll boss you about
3		that's what we do really alright
4		(2.2)
5	Gem	I'm a bit hungry
6	Dan	hungry
7	Anton	hungry
8	Students	((*laugh*))=
9	Anton	=looks like a kind of funny flavoured Turkish delight
10		[or something doesn't it
11	Shari	[a:::h Turkish delight yes=
12	Anton	=blue chlorine flavour ((*turning site model around*)) chlorine flavoured Turkish delight yes=
13	Shari	=or a cheese stick
14	Anton	or a cheese stick yes blue cheese [yes
15	Students	[((*laugh*))
16		(1.5)
17	Anton	((*turning site model around*)) well it's obviously a set isn't it
18		it's a set of forms which have been cut
19	Shari	sliced

20	Anton	sliced yes
21	Gem	there could be a series=
22	Shari	=there's also a series based in height
23	Anton	yes yes bu::t is the series in height is that something to do with the composition

In this extract we see a second frame shift occurring in line 16 with Anton refocusing attention on the process of classifying Dan's five model buildings according to the compositional constraints of the architectural brief in this studio. The process of classifying students' models was a part of every student 'crit' in Week 6 in Anton's studio, but what is unusual and thus noteworthy here is that several students participate in the classifying process without being invited by Anton. We could speculate that the fact that both Gem (line 21) and Shari (lines 19 and 22) volunteer opinions on how the five model buildings could be classified is a consequence of both of them having just previously engaged successfully in collaborative play with their teacher Anton. As importantly, what we have seen in these two episodes of collaborative play is Anton's spontaneous uptake of students' comments, and his extension of these in ways that add to the associations surrounding each design. This is part of the process of developing a rich semiotic network of gestures, memories, metaphors and nicknames around design work (cf. Medway, 1996).

Discussion

The excerpts in this chapter provide evidence of Anton's improvisational pedagogical style and tell us much about the boundaries of the 'desk crit'. The problem is how to account for the variation and open-endedness documented in the episodes here. What actions do the frame shifts we have identified bring about? Do they mark an opportunity for heightened participation, a change in participant structure, a shift in rhetorical situation, a disruption of the genre? Is it useful perhaps to think of the diversity we see in these events as an integral part of the patterning of the desk crit in Anton's studio? As a number of scholars such as Coutinho and Miranda (2009) have noted, it is moments such as these frame shifts that are likely to be fruitful sites of genre research. In focusing on the variation and open-endedness in Anton's crits in the current study, we have found insights from linguistic anthropology and literary/cultural studies useful. We turn now to a brief discussion of these.

The concept of 'performance' and of performing genre is found in linguistic

anthropology as far back as the mid 1970s as part of a post-modernist turn. The anthropologist Richard Bauman, for example, talks of the emergent quality of "verbal art as performance" involving displays of generic creativity and "enhancement of experience" (1975, p.165). The aesthetic dimension of performance is of interest here, with the speaker paying attention (and drawing attention) to the delivery and form of the message (cf. Duranti, 2001). We consider that something similar is happening in the excerpts from the crits in Anton's studio, with the rapid delivery and latching of the interactions signaling increased intensity amongst participants. The last two excerpts of collaborative play are also stylistically marked by Anton's repetition of student utterances, almost as if Anton is savouring his students' words as he encourages them to continue. This sort of spontaneous verbal play is likely to function as a way of generating in students a different stance or a new way of seeing with respect to students' design work. If we think of the crits in Anton's design studio as performances rather than as repetitions or reproductions, this allows for a less stable and more open-ended understanding of genre. The idea of genre as a resource available for participants to draw upon in their performances is found in the work of a number of anthropologists including William Hanks (1996), who eloquently describes genre as "a space of possibilities" (p. 197).

From literary studies and the writings of Bakhtin (1981, 1986) in particular, we borrow the idea that it is the way of genre to always involve a tension between an 'ideal type' and a particular utterance or empirical instance of genre performance. Tension as a theme in Bakhtin's work is seen in his description of centripetal and centrifugal forces and of how individuals negotiate the struggle to create their own meanings from the resources of language, of which genre arguably sits alongside other semiotic tools for meaning-making such as lexico-grammar, gesture and visual images (cf. Lemke, 1999). This approach represents a shift from a view of genre as shaping and organizing events/texts to one that sees the relationship as mutually constitutive, with genre performances inevitably stretching, blurring and mixing the genres that they participate in (Derrida, 1980; Bakhtin, 1986). A number of scholars have contributed to this discussion around the relationship between actual instances of discursive events/texts and abstract genres, and many have found Bakhtin's writings of particular interest.

Anne Freadman is one such scholar. Freadman's (2012) contribution takes the form of a poststructuralist challenge to genre theories that see genre in terms of a systematic relationship between text and context. Arguing against the separation of text and context that she says underlies genre studies in applied linguistics, Freadman (2012) provides an analysis that illustrates how text and context are co-constitutive and thus how context could be better conceived of as a sequence of events in time rather than a fixed occasion. She draws on Bakhtin's (1986) notion of 'responsive chains' in arguing that genre is a diachronic entity, with each 'repetition' or performance responding in some (necessarily different) way to those that came previously. Freadman's (2002, 2012) use of the notion of 'uptake' to cover the act of interpreting an utterance as a particular genre as well as responding to its content is we think useful in understanding the movement and variation in Anton's performance of the crits in our study.

While Freadman (2012) aligns herself most closely with a rhetorical approach to genre, her method draws on literary/cultural studies traditions in which a single text or discursive event is closely analyzed for what it might tell us about the work of genre. Freadman's (2012) example is telling in that it illustrates the dynamic real time interaction of language and context, and (thus) the unpredictability of language-in-use. Her example is of a TV current affairs interview in which there is a tussle between the two participants to impose their contextualization of the event. While such tussles are arguably a generic feature of TV current affairs interviews, Freadman's point is different. She suggests that the utterances that make up the interview participate in a number of different genres as the interview unfolds in real time. These include possibly 'a trial' at the beginning, certainly 'an interview', and 'a farewell' both by dint of the interviewer pronouncing 'it' as such, and according to Freadman, by its uptake the following week. What is important in Freadman's analysis is the idea that the performative force of the interviewer's utterances serves to alter the genre in which the exchange was participating in until that moment. This idea that through utterances and thus through the use of genre, people not only perform context, but also change context is a challenge to Rhetorical Genre Studies.

In our study of Anton's design studio, there were few tussles and little evidence of the disruption of the crit events. As the teacher, Anton's uptakes were by far the most

consequential. Our interpretation is that Anton's recontextualization of multiple genres into the desk crit events served to accomplish the many different goals of the studio including classroom management, assessment of student work, and the teaching of design. A comparison can be made with Bakhtin's analysis of the novel as exploring the interplay between simple and complex genres, with complex genres "absorb[ing] and digest[ing] various primary (simple) genres" (1986, p.62).

Concluding comments

This study responds to the caveat expressed by the rhetorical genre scholar Judy Segal (2002) that "highlighting similarity and hiding difference are irrepressible actions in genre study" even for those who "are interested in processes of destabilizing genres, resisting, refusing, and, of course, blurring genres" (p.171). The case study approach employed in this research has allowed us to explore the variation within one teacher's performance of the desk crit in the design studio. Insights from linguistic anthropology and literary studies have helped us consider this variation in terms of genre as a resource with each performance fixing the 'potentialities' of a genre/s (see Coutinho & Miranda, 2009). From this perspective, we can understand genre as belonging to the *habitus* of a discipline, so that while the 'potentialities' of a genre/s may act to constrain speakers, these may be subverted or transgressed in line with the particular goals of a speaker/writer (Coutinho & Miranda, 2009). Such an understanding opens up a space to consider the tension between stability and creativity in language use and encompasses both the generic disruption in Freadman's (2012) current affairs interview and Anton's generic improvisation in our study.

This study makes a link between Anton's improvisational style of pedagogy and the broader culture of the design studio community in which individuality and creativity are highly prized social values. We argue that architecture students would benefit from an awareness of such variation – found in this study within even a single teacher's generic performance - and of how the rich discursive environment in the studio (replete with narrative, collaborative play, metaphoric language) plays an important role in generating design ideas and solutions. Students would benefit also we think from critical reflection on the social, cultural and historical meanings bound up in design studio genres (cf. Freadman, 2012). It is interesting to note in conclusion that it is through participation in the discursive events in the design studio, events

which are routine and recurrent but in which improvisation is on display and encouraged, that the architecture students are socialized into the social norms of this community - creativity and individuality.

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