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From book to screen: Changing genre patterns and communicative purposes

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on a genre-based study of EFL educational websites on two text levels: the surface (screenshot) level and the hyperlinked level. Findings suggest that genre patterns on the surface level emulate those of printed course books, whereas the hyperlinked level reflects textual patterns and participant roles typical of the ‘digital media space’. These findings are discussed in the light of the Norwegian national EFL subject curriculum’s construal of ‘digital skills’.

Keywords

genre patterns, efl educational websites, digital competence, efl subject curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Background, aims and research questions

A central element in foreign language education has always been the provision of samples of discourse in the target language for reception, through varying sources, channels and media. In Norwegian teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), a course book has traditionally constituted the point of departure as regards curricular topics. This course book contains texts for reception representing a more or less traditional repertoire of genres, such as fact files and articles related to civilisation, as well as literary texts such as short stories and poems. During recent decades, however, digital platforms have taken on a gradually larger proportion of text mediation in Norwegian classrooms. The national survey *Monitor 2011* reports that more than eighty per cent of the students at upper secondary level use a computer at least once a week in the EFL subject, and that upper secondary schools on the whole include resources for integration with subject-specific digital teaching aids in their budgets (Egeberg et al., 2012).

At the time of writing, print-based and digital media continue to exist side by side, demonstrated, for example, by the fact that EFL course books are routinely published with ancillary educational websites. Although this co-exist-


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ence has varying impact on EFL classrooms, mode of information will always exert a certain influence on pedagogies (Luke, 2003). Digitisation of EFL texts for reception has an obvious practical side, in that it facilitates and enhances aspects of multimodality in the language learning classroom. The educational websites combine writing with other modes of representation, for example moving images, assembling into one medium modes of representation that previously required separate media, such as books and videotapes. The Internet connection, however, is the feature of the educational websites which most strongly affects the EFL text repertoire. By way of connecting directly to the Internet, the EFL websites alter the published repertoire of EFL genres for reception traditionally mediated by paper-based course books.

How, then, does web-based mediation of texts change genre patterns in the EFL subject? In an attempt to provide some answers to this question, this article will compare the ranges of genres for reception rendered in four print-based EFL course books and the educational websites pertaining to them. This genre-based comparison will focus on differences between book and screen, related not so much to new technical affordances inherent in digital media as to differences related to interaction and communication between text and student.

In genre theory based on functional linguistics (Halliday, 1994), definitions of genre have *goal orientation* or *communicative purpose* as a central aspect (Martin, 2009; Swales, 1990). When discussing genres pertaining to educational domains, a factor to consider is that the pedagogical context imposes constraints on course books in terms of text cultures (Berge, 2012) related to school discourse and to specific, recognisable curricular topics. These constraints do not apply to the same extent to educational websites, simply because they connect by hyperlinks to genres published on the Internet, which in most cases are created from quite different communicative motivations. Interesting areas to investigate, then, are how communicative purposes change when the Internet becomes a co-mediator of EFL texts for reception, and to what extent these aspects of web-based learning are reflected in the principles and aims of the national guidelines specified in the EFL subject curriculum. Thus, this study sets out to answer the following research question: Which changes in genre distribution and communicative purposes occur when EFL genres for reception are moved from course books to educational websites, and what consequences do these changes entail for teachers and learners in the EFL subject?

EFL in Norwegian upper secondary school

The context of the present study is the mandatory EFL course at upper secondary level, Norwegian students' eleventh year of tuition in the English language. This course consists of four hours a week and is one of the common core subjects required for access to higher education. The subject curriculum is divided into four main areas: *Language learning*, which concerns learning strategies; *Oral communication*; *Written communication*; and *Culture, society*

and literature. Since 1994 the EFL subject curriculum for upper secondary school has been structured around competence aims and does not name particular texts for reception, which implies a freedom of choice with regard to learning material. The overall impression is, nevertheless, that course books remain an important text source for Norwegian teachers (Askeland & Aamotsbakken, 2013; Juuhl, Hontvedt, & Skjelbred, 2010), although in later years complemented by an increasing range of digitally mediated material.

Since the 1990s, Norwegian education authorities have given a high priority to the integration of ICTs in schools. After phases characterised by upgrading technological infrastructure and reorganising learning environments in schools, the attention has in recent years been directed to digital literacy and the role of technology in students' building of knowledge (Erstad, 2013). The curriculum reform of 2006, *Knowledge Promotion* (LK06), manifested the importance of digital literacy in formalising *digital skills* as a basic set of skills across all subjects in the Norwegian national curriculum, along with reading, writing, oral skills and numeracy. Digital skills in the EFL subject are defined in the introduction to the subject curriculum:

Digital skills in English means being able to use a varied selection of digital tools, media and resources to assist in language learning, to communicate in English and to acquire relevant knowledge in the subject of English. (...) The development of digital skills involves gathering and processing information to create different kinds of text. Formal requirements in digital texts means that effects, images, tables, headlines and bullet points are compiled to emphasise and communicate a message. This further involves using digital sources in written texts and oral communication and having a critical and independent attitude to the use of sources (...). (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, EFL subject curriculum, 2006)

The section *Written communication* in the competence aims has an aim requiring the student 'to produce different kinds of texts suited to formal digital requirements for different digital media',¹ while the *Language learning* section of the subject curriculum emphasises the critical use of sources, or, in other words, texts for reception.

Related research

Medium-induced changes in representation of texts for reception in school subjects have been investigated in several research projects during recent years. Bezemer and Kress (2008) have conducted a diachronic study of changes in the representation of curricular topics where they point out the different affordances, that is, the different possibilities and constraints of different

1. This aim was formulated slightly differently in the first two versions of the LK06 EFL subject curriculum. The 2006 version required the student to produce 'composite texts in digital media', and the 2010 revision stated that the student should be able to produce 'different types of text in digital media'.

media, such as books and computers, as well as different modalities (for example writing, images and speech). Central terms in the study are *transformation*, changes within a mode of representation, and *transduction*, changes from one mode of representation to another. If we choose to exemplify this with the account of the Norman invasion, a typical curricular topic in the EFL subject, *transformation* is evident when comparing the rendering of the topic in course books from different time periods, for example, 1950 and 2010, while *transduction* describes differences occurring when the account is moved from a page of written text – or, for that matter, the tapestry in Bayeux – to an audio clip or an animated cartoon on a website. An important focus of Bezemer and Kress' project is how such changes in the representation of meaning material affect pedagogical practices and students' knowledge building.

Similarly, the switch from blackboard to 'smartboard' entails changes in the representation, transmission and use of learning material. Jewitt (2011, p. 193) has studied pedagogical practices connected to the use of interactive whiteboards (IWB) in L1 (first language) English classrooms. A salient effect brought on by the IWB was a *diversification of texts* used in the English classroom through the 'repackaging of previously discrete texts for study'. Jewitt found that connecting education with out-of-school domains created 'third spaces' which unsettled boundaries and forms of knowledge (ibid.). The concept of 'third space' is also used by Lund (2006), who, studying the use of online discussion forums in EFL teaching, identified a third space emerging at the interface of the 'school script' (curricular learning activities) and students' digitally mediated 'lifeworld' contexts (p. 192). This third space held potentials for learning, Lund observed, conditioned by support from teachers knowing how to exploit such moves between contexts (2006, p. 195).

Although research has documented the impact on school discourse by the introduction of digital media from various angles, a systematic mapping of print-based and digitally mediated EFL genres has yet to be carried out. This is a main objective in my ongoing PhD project *Genre in the digitised EFL classroom*, which provides the data for the present study. The purpose of making explicit patterns of genres for reception in the EFL subject is to provide a small but, hopefully, useful contribution of empirical research to current discourse concerning the role of texts and media in foreign language learning.

Theoretical framework

The analysis and discussion of genre patterns focus on aspects related to context of communication, participants, and communicative purpose, employing Halliday's (1994) systemic functional grammar (SFG) as a theoretical framework. Halliday's well-known tripartite model of analysis pairs off aspects of the *situational context* of a given text, namely, *field* (relating to activity), *tenor* (relating to participant roles) and *mode* (relating to communication channel) with aspects of *communicative purpose* which Halliday denotes *metafunctions*. These aspects are described as *ideational* (relating to topical content),

interpersonal (relating to the roles and relationships of participants) and *textual* (relating to structural and rhetorical aspects of the text). The present study has employed the strand of the model relating to the metafunctions, directing the focus to how the genres rendered in the educational websites communicate with the EFL students.

CENTRAL CONCEPTS IN THE PRESENT STUDY

'Text', 'text type' and 'genre'

Texts for reception included in the present data material are placed in genre categories which are identified from an experiential and functional point of view, bearing on the cultural context of school literacy. As Lüders, Prøitz, and Rasmussen (2010) point out, 'genres play a pivotal role in connecting micro-practices with macro structures, whether in art, politics or science' (p. 949), and we may add, education. EFL genres for reception belong in particular social and pedagogical practices, such as reading for information, exploring topical areas, reflecting on literature or preparing for projects. Thus, the present study has defined *texts for reception* as *coherent and cohesive units of discourse* used as a basis for knowledge, reflection or inspiration within the EFL subject.

Genre categories

In a discussion of genres from the perspective of communicative purpose it seemed natural to form main genre categories according to dominant *text type*. As explained in Biber (1989) and Paltridge (2002), *genre* and *text type* represent two complementary perspectives on discourse. While genre characteristics are influenced by text-external criteria, that is, conventions linked to the context of the discourse, text type is defined according to text-internal criteria, such as rhetorical organisation and the purpose of writing. Thus, genres relevant to the present study are grouped into the following categories² according to chief communicative purpose in a school context: *descriptive and informative genres*, which basically display and convey factual information; *expository genres*, where pieces of information are processed, analysed and discussed; *persuasive genres* where the main communicative purpose is to influence the reader; *narrative/poetic/aesthetic genres* which typically include aspects of entertainment and appeal to the imagination and emotions, and *dialogic and reflective genres* which are characterised by spontaneous expression, 'here-and-now' reflection and a strong involvement of the reader.

2. The main categories are also in part inspired by the *Wheel of Writing*, a model originating from the development of Norwegian national writing tests (Berge, 2005; Evensen, 2010).

FIG. 1: GENRE CATEGORIES

Descriptive and informative genres
Factual text
Introductory text
Timeline
Map
Graph/table of statistics
Instructional text/recipe
Information brochure
Report
Expository genres
Website as text
Article ^a /feature article/news report/documentary
Persuasive genres
Advertisement
Speech/lecture
Argumentative article/letter to the editor
Book review/film review
Narrative/poetic/aesthetic genres
Novel
Play
Film script
Story
Biography
Poem/song
Cartoon
Dialogic and reflective genres
Diary
Letter/email
Interview/dialogue
Blog/blog entry
Discussion forum
Personal account

a. Expository article

The *function and use* of the texts in an EFL context is an essential premise for this system of genre categorisation. This is, perhaps, particularly evident regarding the genres *factual text*, *introductory text* and *website as text*. In the present study, these genres are understood as follows:

- The *factual text* conveys salient information within a particular curricular topic. Examples include geographical, demographic and historical facts of a country within the English-speaking world, or a description of the short story as a literary genre.
- The *introductory text* is relatively short, in some cases consisting only of two or three lines, and its typical placement is immediately prior to a new topic, to give the student a chance to ‘tune in’ to what is coming.
- *Website as text* is identified as a discrete genre category on the hyperlinked level. Admittedly, it is, arguably, problematic to analyse websites at the level of genre. For example, in the model of analysis presented by Lüders et al. (2010), the first level represents the *technological platform* (paper, Internet), the second level represents *media* (newspaper, weblog), while *genres* (op-ed, online diary) constitute the third level and *texts* (representations of content) the fourth level. According to this model, neither *website as text* nor *blog* could be categorised as genres but would be placed at the media level. In the present study, however, whole websites as well as short texts are regarded as genres for reception due to their functions as formats representing curricular topics to students.

METHODS

Methods of analysis

The methods applied in the present study consisted of a quantitative and a qualitative strand of analysis. The *quantitative* strand registered genre distribution in the course books and the educational websites. The data were gleaned by placing relevant texts for reception in the genre category (see Fig. 1) regarded as closest in terms of chief communicative purpose and conventional genre characteristics. In cases where the student was presented with a series or set of similar texts for reception presented as a unit, for example, where a hyperlink provided a series of biographies, the collection of texts was registered as two occurrences of the genre. This was done to avoid skewing the distribution results.

Genre distribution in the educational websites was identified on two levels, the *surface level* and the *hyperlinked level*. Speaking in somewhat simplified terms, the surface level appeared in what Finnemann (1999) denotes the ‘reading as such mode’, meaning texts appearing directly on the screen,³ whereas

3. In a sense, the surface level itself had several layers, i.e. ‘leafing through’ the pages required several clicks on links leading to labelled sections.

the hyperlinked level appeared in the ‘navigating mode’, which is activated as the reader makes his or her own trajectory inwards through the hyperlinks (ibid.).

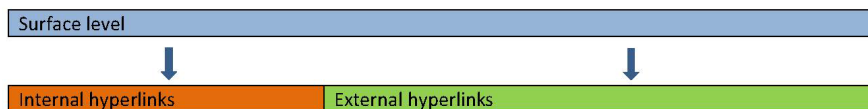


Fig. 2: Levels of analysis, educational websites

The hyperlinks rendered in the educational websites branched into *internal links*, that is, ancillary material furnished by the publishers themselves (separate audio files and summaries, reference material and links to other sections of the website), and *external links* leading directly to other Internet sites. The present study focused on the web-based hyperlinks, which means that *the hyperlinked level* was restricted to sites or texts on the Internet accessed by links provided in the EFL educational websites. Links leading further from these connected Internet sites, however, were not included in the study (for example, a *New York Times* article accessed by a hyperlink in the *Stunt* website was registered on the hyperlinked level; but the links rendered in the *New York Times* article itself were not registered).

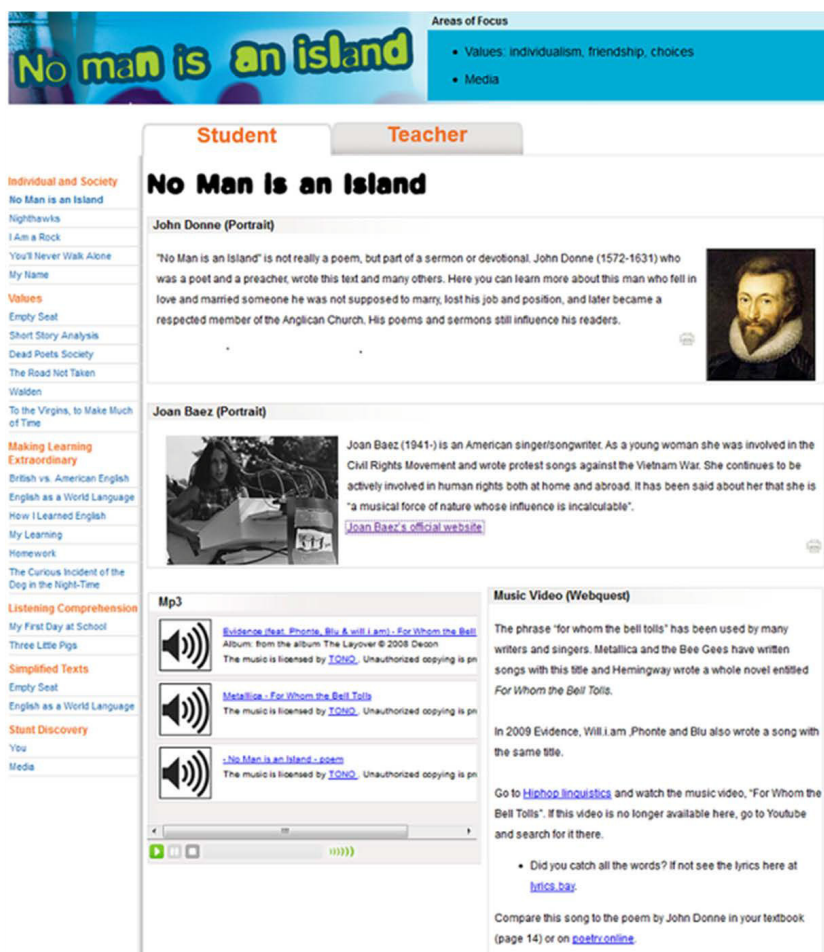


Fig. 3: Screenshot illustrating surface level and hyperlinked level

The levels of analysis are illustrated by the screenshot from *Stunt* in Fig. 3. On the *surface level* there are two short *biographies* introducing John Donne and Joan Baez, and an *introductory text* (see section Genre categories) presenting a collection of audio files. The column on the left and the Mp3 files towards the bottom of the page are *internal links* and thus not included in the data material, whereas the seven links directly connecting to other Internet websites are registered on the *hyperlinked level*.

The *qualitative* strand of the study has analysed text samples of the most frequent genre for reception in terms of communicative purpose. Core elements in the *metafunctions* dimension of Halliday's (1994) tripartite model (see section Theoretical framework) was applied in a summative analysis of the most frequent genres emerging as a result of the quantitative study. Thus, text samples representing the most frequent genre in printed course books, the surface level of websites and the hyperlinked level of websites, respectively, were analysed in terms of ideational content, interpersonal relations mediated through the text, as well as reflections of communicative purpose through textual organisation.

Selection of data material

The empirical material consisted of 1,438 *texts for reception* (see section 'Text', 'text type' and 'genre'). The texts were either rendered in writing only, or in written or spoken language combined with images, moving images and/or aural matter such as music. Tasks, questions and texts treating purely linguistic topics were excluded from the data material.

The texts were extracted from four published sets of teaching material, each consisting of one textbook and one educational website, which were judged representative in respect of being produced by four prominent Norwegian publishers and thus marketed and used throughout the country. Another criterion for selection was the 'unit' structure of the sets: the textbooks and the websites had the same organisational structure in terms of chapters and topics, which facilitated a comparison between printed and web-based texts.

- *Stunt* published by Samlaget⁴
- *Experience* by Gyldendal
- *Targets* by Aschehoug
- *Passage* by Cappelen Damm.

4. Publication of *Stunt* has now been taken over by Fagbokforlaget.

FIG. 4: DATA MATERIAL

Set of EFL teaching material	Surface texts from educational websites	Hyperlinked texts from educational websites	Texts from printed course books
<i>Stunt</i>	80	238	211
<i>Experience</i>	36	60	184
<i>Targets</i>	67	111	170
<i>Passage</i>	76	94	111
Total	259	503	676

The data were extracted from all the chapters of the textbooks and from the first three chapters of the websites, which yielded 762 texts from the educational websites and 676 from their printed textbook counterparts. The idea behind the limitation of the material from the websites was to balance the size of the two categories of corpus material, as the educational websites contained a considerably greater number of texts than the textbooks.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Results of the quantitative analyses

Course books and the surface level of educational websites

The table (fig. 5) displays the most frequent genres for reception in the material representing the course books and the surface level of the educational websites.

Two slightly paradoxical aspects emerged as points of salience. There were notable differences in *figures* between the printed course books and the surface level of the websites, yet the *range* of the most frequent genres showed strong similarities.

Addressing the figures first, the results from the course books showed a relatively even distribution of genres. Each of the three most frequent genres, *factual text*, *introductory text* and *biography*, represented less than twenty per cent of the total. This pattern of distribution was radically different as regards the surface texts of the websites, where the occurrences of the most frequent genre, the *introductory text*, constituted nearly half of the texts for reception.⁵ The reason for this was in part the large number of hyperlinks introduced by a short text of this type, which can be interpreted as a medium-induced change in genre patterns. The educational websites typically structured learning material by way of a page spread corresponding to a topical area, with elaborating material connected by numerous internal and external hyperlinks. Where the continuity of the texts in the course books were maintained by linearity and turning of numbered pages, the hyperlinks on a digital page formed reading paths

5. It should be noted, however, that the figures for *story* and *poem/song*, for example, would be far higher if the texts accessed by *internal links* were subsumed with the surface texts in the registration of data.

leading ‘inward’ instead of ‘forward’ and thus depended on explanatory texts to guide the student’s navigation.

FIG. 5: DISTRIBUTION OF GENRES IN COURSE BOOKS AND THE SURFACE LEVEL OF EFL WEBSITES

Course books					The surface level of educational websites				
Factual text				18.3%	Introductory text				47.5%
Stunt 35	Exp. 43	Tar 33	Pas 11	122	Stunt 39	Exp. 13	Tar 24	Pas 47	123
Biography				16%	Factual text				16.2%
Stunt 47	Exp. 22	Tar 32	Pas 7	108	Stunt 10	Exp. 9	Tar 9	Pas 14	42
Introductory text				13.6%	Biography				12.4%
Stunt 23	Exp. 22	Tar 20	Pas 27	92	Stunt 24	Exp. 1	Tar 6	Pas 1	32
Poem/song				11.7%	Article/News report				6.6%
Stunt 29	Exp. 19	Tar 14	Pas 17	79	Stunt 1	Exp. 1	Tar 10	Pas 5	17
Story				8.5%	Poem/song				2.7%
Stunt 15	Exp. 12	Tar 21	Pas 10	58	Stunt 3	Exp. 2	Tar 0	Pas 2	7
Article/news report				5.6%	Interview/dialogue				2.7%
Stunt 13	Exp. 13	Tar 5	Pas 7	38	Stunt 0	Exp. 1	Tar 5	Pas 1	7
Graph/table of statistics				3.7%	Story				2.3%
Stunt 6	Exp. 4	Tar 11	Pas 4	25	Stunt 2	Exp. 3	Tar 1	Pas 0	6
Novel excerpt				2.9%	Timeline				1.9%
Stunt 6	Exp. 6	Tar 4	Pas 4	20	Stunt 0	Exp. 3	Tar 2	Pas 0	5
Map				2%	Instructional text				1.5%
Stunt 1	Exp. 1	Tar 9	Pas 3	14	Stunt 1	Exp. 0	Tar 2	Pas 1	4
Other				17.7%	Other				6.2%
Stunt 36	Exp.42	Tar 21	Pas 21	120	Stunt 0	Exp. 3	Tar 8	Pas 5	16

An additional factor partly explaining the far lower percentage of introductory text in the course books was that the majority of the *biography* occurrences in the printed material functioned as introductory texts to stories or poems by way of providing information on author and provenance. This use of the biography genre was somewhat rarer on the surface level of the websites.

The second salient result was that the range of the most frequent genres on the surface level of the websites mirrored that of the printed course books. As pointed out by Lüders et al. (2010), genres are part of wide discursive social processes ‘which indicate some shared frame of reference (...)’ (p. 950). The similarity in genre patterns forges ‘a cohesive tie’ (Lemke, 2002) between the textbooks and the educational websites as they appear on the ‘screenshot’ level, along with similarities maintained through design, such as colour, font, logo and chapter structure.

In view of established text cultures and pedagogical practices in the EFL subject, it is not surprising that educational websites borrow global structural features from the familiar course book. The same logic applies to the frequency of typical textbook genres on the surface level of educational websites. Factual texts select and condense information into ‘bitesize chunks’ which are considered suitable for the age and proficiency level of the target group, and the short introductory texts prepare the students for upcoming curricular topics. These are texts which contribute to what Bezemer and Kress (2008) describe as recontextualisation of meaning material, which in an educational context means taking material from the outside world and making it suitable for a learning situation.

Genres for reception on the hyperlinked level of educational websites

On the hyperlinked level of the website, the texts showed considerably more diversity than on the surface level. The *website as text* was the most dominant genre on this level with almost thirty-two per cent, followed by several subgenres of *article* which represented a quarter of the hyperlinked genres (see Fig. 6 below).

FIG. 6: DISTRIBUTION OF GENRES ON HYPERLINKED LEVEL (NUMBERS OF OCCURRENCES)

Genre for reception	Stunt	Experience	Targets	Passage	Total
Website as text	50	36	42	32	160 (31.8%)
Article/feature article/ news report/ documentary	72	4	21	28	125 (24.8%)
Factual text	20	12	7	2	41 (8.1%)
Biography	25	0	7	4	36 (7.1%)
Poem/song	23	0	3	4	30 (6%)
Instructional text/ information brochure	2	6	5	10	23 (4.6%)
Timeline	8	1	1	2	12 (2.4%)
Interview	3	0	4	4	11 (2.2%)
Graph/table of statistics	8	0	0	0	8 (1.6%)
Discussion forums	0	0	7	0	7 (1.4%)
Blog/blog post	5	0	0	1	6 (1.2%)
Advertisement	2	0	3	0	5 (1%)
Other/miscellaneous	20	1	11	7	39 (7.8%)
Total	238	60	111	94	503

Interestingly, the well-known *factual text* associated with the EFL course book represents merely eight per cent of the hyperlinked texts. This demonstrates the status of the factual text as a typical ‘school genre’ consisting of a condensed accumulation of basic facts adapted to the age level of the students using the course book. *Articles*, *documentaries* and *news reports*, on the other hand, are typically composed for purposes outside school and transmitted, for

example, by media portals such as online newspapers and television channels. Interestingly, the variant of *biography* occurring most frequently on the hyperlinked level was an independent, fairly extensive text, different from the short variant in the course books, which typically served to introduce a literary text or a historical event.

Results of the qualitative analyses

The following paragraphs will present a brief analysis of the genre emerging as most frequent in each of the main categories of data material (course books, and the surface and hyperlinked levels of educational websites). The text samples are randomly selected.

Factual text

The following factual text is retrieved from the course book *Experience*:

English as Lingua Franca

A lingua franca is a language used by people from different countries to communicate when they do not speak each other's languages. English is without doubt the most widely spoken lingua franca. Have you ever been to a country where you could not communicate with anybody in English? Thought so! Although often on a very elementary level, people all over the world will be able to tell you where to find a toilet, a bank, a nice restaurant, the beach, the price of bus fares, or the time when a boat leaves. Additionally, you will almost certainly find written information in English, such as menus, maps and all kinds of tourist information. (Heian, Lokøy, Ankerheim, & Drew, 2006, p. 47)

Analysing the text applying the metafunctions from Halliday's SFG model, the *ideational* metafunction is identified as the explanation of the concept *lingua franca* to a person who is not familiar with the concept. This is shown by the initial choice of a formula typically used in definitions, consisting of the indefinite article (*a*), which signals *new* information, then the concept that is to be explained, linked by a copula (*is*) to the definition or explanation. The *interpersonal* metafunction is that of an authority on the topic communicating with a novice. Indirectly the interpersonal dimension is realised by the authoritative tone of the discourse, and in this case it is also directly realised by second person address (*you*). The *textual* metafunction is realised by a sharp focus on the topic. There is no identifiable introduction or conclusion. The text defines the concept of lingua franca and supports the definition with examples of how it functions.

Introductory text

The following sample from the *Passage* textbook introduces Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*:

The extract you are about to read is taken from the novel *The Kite Runner*. The story takes place in Afghanistan in the 1970s before Afghanistan was invaded by the Soviet Union. Here we meet twelve-year-old Amir and his best friend Hassan who is the son of his family's servant, Ali. Their friendship is often put to the test because, not only do the two boys belong to different social classes, they also belong to different ethnic groups. (Burgess & Sørhus, 2009, p. 86)

Here the *ideational* metafunction is identified as an introduction to an upcoming novel excerpt in terms of presenting its setting, main characters, and parts of the plot. The *interpersonal* metafunction is interpreted as asymmetrical by the information presented as *given* (*the extract you are about to read*) which indicates that the novel extract is selected for the reader by an authority. The use of first person plural (*we*) later in the text signals a planned common relationship with the upcoming text; that is, the introductory text represents the first step in initiating the reader in the novel and the discourse around it. As for the *textual* metafunction, the introductory text has the form of a textual fragment or the initial component of a larger text. The incompleteness of the text, first and foremost shown by its lack of a conclusion, underlines its deictic function.

Website as text

The structure of digital genres is typically organised along non-linear as well as linear patterns. Therefore, in analysing the *website as text*, the strand of analysis regarding the textual metafunction required a more complex approach than the descriptions of the print-based genres. The basis for the qualitative analysis of the *website as text* took as its point of departure the *homepage* in the sense of the entrance to the website (Kwaśnik, Askehave, & Ellerup Nielsen, 2005), and followed a possible trajectory from the homepage inwards through the hyperlinks in order to identify genre patterns embedded in the website.

The exemplar of *website as text* is the official website of the artist Joan Baez.

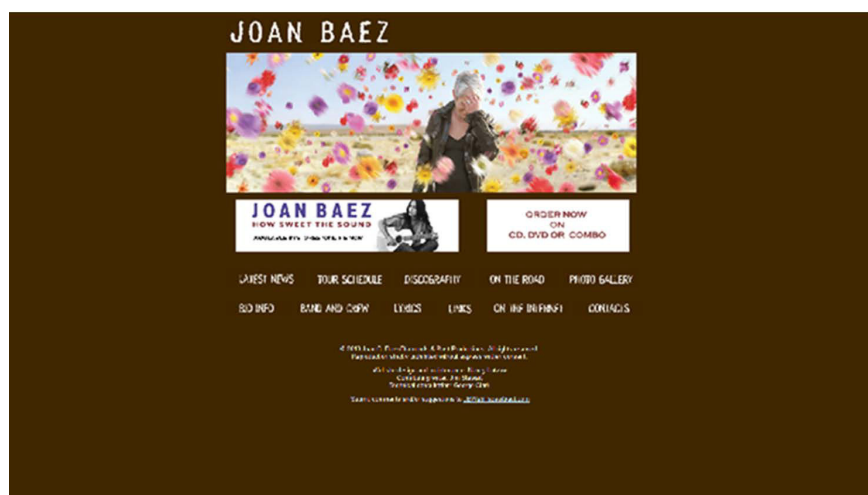


Fig. 7: Joan Baez' official website

Two photos of Joan Baez introduce the artist's homepage, one constituting part of an advertisement for the artist's next concert tour, which is placed next to an online shopping device for CDs and DVDs. This foregrounds a commercial aspect of the homepage: by clicking the 'order now' link, purchases can be made directly. This identifies a 'crystallisation' of the Source-User relationship between the artist's homepage and the individual fan or reader/browser, in the form of a specific proposal (Lemke, 2002, p. 313) of a commercial deal.

Link anchors in the lower half of the homepage lead to the various sections of the website, which include *Latest News*, *Tour Schedule*, *Discography*, *Photo Gallery*, *Band and Crew* and *Contacts*. These sections contain a varied range of genres, such as blog entries, personal accounts, song lyrics and advertisements. The link entitled *Band and Crew* is particularly interesting in terms of genre hybridisation: the stories about Baez' band members are texts with strong commercial features strewn with past merits, favourable reviews and recommendations from other artists. Orlikowski and Yates (1994) observe that 'when changes to established genres are repeatedly enacted and become widely adopted within the community, genre variants or even new genres may emerge' (p. 545). The genre used throughout the *Band and Crew* section can be construed as a hybrid between established genres from three text cultures: a short biography; an advertisement issued by a publisher; and a promotional text used by booking agents. This mixing of information with promotional elements has been documented within domains connected to commerce and trade (Bhatia, 1999, p. 25; Skulstad, 2002).

Analysing Baez' website from the perspective of communicative purpose, the *ideational metafunction* is realised through information concerning tours (past, present and upcoming), recorded songs, the artist's biography and history, and crew. The *interpersonal metafunction* is expressed by the artist's communication with her audience: online record sales are foregrounded, along with lists of tour dates and venues, assuming that the artist's music is the priority for users of the website. A sense of community is maintained through the *textual metafunction*, which through blog entries, informal accounts, photo series, song lyrics, advertisements and online shopping devices invites fans to an arena of musical enjoyment and participation in an artist's life and activities in exchange for loyalty and commercial trade, that is, the purchase of records and tickets.

DISCUSSION

From 'bookspace' to digital media space

The genre patterns emerging in the textbooks and educational websites as well as the genres embedded in the example of *website as text* described above suggest that the most significant change related to digitisation of texts for reception lies on a sociological level. This aspect of a digitised text world is explained by Lankshear and Knobel (2007, p. 11), who observe that as con-

fined ‘bookspace’ gives way to ‘digital media space’, textual order and social relations linked to texts change. Lankshear and Knobel quote Schrage’s (2001) claim that ‘*the so-called ‘information revolution’ (...) is actually, and more accurately, a ‘relationship revolution’*” (emphasis in original). This focus on relationship is evident in the trajectory through the hyperlinks of the *website as text*. For example, a blog embedded in Joan Baez’s website contains an account of her mother’s 100th birthday celebration – a text of the type normally distributed to a circle of extended family and friends. Myers (2010, p. 11) observes that ‘[t]he reader of blogs is not just picking up bits and pieces of information; he or she is constantly testing out membership in a group, perhaps a very small group, of people who know the kind of thing the blogger is writing about.’ As we see, group membership is not only a feature of social media, such as Facebook, which realises explicit membership through profiles and regular communicative exchange; community formation is a constant process also mediated through homepages such as the examples explored above.

The digital media space in the EFL subject curriculum

A question to consider, then, is to what extent the impact of the digital media space on social behavior and communication patterns is sufficiently reflected in the EFL subject curriculum. As stated in the introduction, digital skills are related to two main aspects of the EFL subject: to exploit the affordances of digital media both in information retrieval and text production; and to be critically aware of factors such as reliability, quality and legal issues when navigating the myriad of digital information and communication channels. The skills needed to ‘produce different kinds of texts suited to formal digital requirements for different digital media’ are categorised under *Written communication*, whereas the ability to evaluate and use different digital resources is included in the *Language learning* section of the EFL competence aims. Specific references to the social sphere are restricted to questions concerning issues such as provenance, reliability and copyright of text material. The third section of competence aims, *Culture, society and literature*, contains no reference whatsoever to the digital media space.

This suggests that the Norwegian EFL subject curriculum still reifies textual and interactional structures characteristic of the ‘bookspace’, even though young people’s use of digital media is increasingly social and community-based, for example, through affiliations (formal and informal membership of networks), creativity (e.g. fan fiction), circulations (e.g. blogging) and collaborative problem solving (Jenkins, 2007a, p. 25). Reinking, Labbo, and McKenna (2000) proposed an extension of Piaget’s *assimilation* and *accommodation* theory to levels of integration of ICT in education. From the perspective of this model it can be argued that the Norwegian EFL subject curriculum has *assimilated* digital skills into existing pedagogical practices, but needs to take a further step towards *accommodation* of digital media, an approach which, according to Reinking et al. involves a transformation of pedagogical

practices. Elements from curricular aims and principles related to intercultural competence, for instance, may be integrated in construals of digital skills.

Interestingly, the *Framework for basic skills*⁶ (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2012), presents a taxonomy where ‘[ethical reflection and assessment of] social media and the Internet as information and communication channel’ are among the assessment criteria for the highest level of digital skills. Although retaining a slightly distanced perspective on the Internet as a social arena, the social aspects of the web are thus more clearly expressed in the framework than in the rather instrumental specifications of digital skills in the EFL subject curriculum. EFL education is, certainly, about accessing information and producing texts. Nonetheless, it is also about the acquisition of skills that, in Jenkins’ words, (2007b, p. 112) ‘enable participation in the new communities emerging within a networked society’, which involves, for example, the development of skills in knowledge pooling and negotiation through communities (ibid). For the student this means, among other things, turning the focus back and forth between the evaluation of Internet-mediated matter from a distance, to evaluating and defining one’s own place and role(s) in online communities of various sorts. Sound and well-functioning participation in the digital media space requires, therefore, an awareness of participant roles and social dynamics in online community building, which are aspects of digital skills that should perhaps be stated explicitly in the EFL subject curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This study has presented genre patterns on EFL educational websites, demonstrating how genre patterns on the surface level emulate those of the print-based EFL textbooks, preserving the teacher-learner polarity mediated by the conventional ‘bookspace’, whereas genre patterns on the hyperlinked level are clearly influenced by the paradigm of the digital media space, which revolves around relationships and communities. Digital skills as specified in the EFL subject curriculum are, however, connected to language learning and text production and to ethical and critical use of information sources, with no particular focus directed towards social and cultural aspects of the digital media space.

Lankshear and Knobel (2007, p. 14) observe that ‘[c]onventional social relations associated with roles of author/authority and expert have broken down radically under the move from ‘publishing’ to participation, from centralized authority to mass collaboration (...).’ In an educational context, this means that our students are exposed to an extremely broadened range of genres and modalities, and also to a new culture of communication and exchange mediated by texts, entailing new participant roles. In other words, what we do now is ask our students to straddle two text paradigms, the book space and the dig-

6. The Framework for Basic Skills is developed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training as guidelines for subject curriculum committees.

ital space. This might be necessary for many years yet; the question of whether the digital space will eventually take over all domains of literacy will depend on future development within the digitisation of literature and learning material. For now, it seems necessary for the EFL subject to address more explicitly the changes in communicative and interactional roles brought on by the digital media space. The student is no longer merely regarded as an audience by the authors of a web-based text, but as a participant in a community, a party in collaboration, a potential customer, a contributor of loyalty; in short, part of many-faceted relationships beyond the confines of the classroom.

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