

CONTENDING WITH CONTEXT IN ACADEMIC LITERACY

Henriette Murray

Department of Linguistics

University of Stellenbosch

1. Introduction

My work with the texts of graduate students in a distance teaching programme set me thinking about two issues. Firstly, why do so many students - by no means only undergraduates from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds - fail to attain a level of academic literacy that enables them to do more than regurgitate textual information? Secondly, why do special programmes to help such students so often meet with limited success?

In search of a systematic framework within which one might begin to conceptualize such pedagogical issues a little more clearly - with a view to their eventual empirical investigation - I made an extensive exploratory survey of some of the recent linguistics literature on, for instance, literacy, written communication and language teaching. In accordance with the views expressed by Stevens (1988:299) and Tannen (1988: 11), I hoped that linguistics might provide the "intellectual base" for addressing these issues.

This paper, then, is a preliminary report on the literature survey.

2. The myth of textual autonomy - a probable cause

The myth of textual autonomy has been identified as a problem in "academic literacy for students" (Haas, 1994:45; Geisler, 1994:93). I will argue that the perpetuation of the 'myth' of the 'autonomous' text is, in fact, a leading cause of one of the most serious problems in academic literacy: namely that of the numerous prospective academic literates,

including graduate students, who never progress beyond an ability to retrieve and repeat information from academic texts. The reason, I will argue, is that the perpetuation of the myth impedes the development of the student's critical ability - a vital prerequisite for fully functional academic literacy.

3. What is this "myth" of textual autonomy?

Academic texts, according to Haas (1994:45), are viewed by many as autonomous,¹ that is, as "discrete, highly explicit, even 'timeless' entities functioning without contextual support from author, reader, or culture".²

This view of the nature of texts has sparked a heated debate in the literature. Opponents of this view have called the notion of textual autonomy anything from an "oversimplification" (Nystrand 1987:197) and a "troubled ideal" (Geisler, 1994:4)³ to a "revered" (Nash 1990:29) and even a "very dangerous" (Crismore and Farnsworth, 1990:118) "myth" (Haas, 1994:45). The depersonalised, decontextualised, objective style of Western academic writing has, accordingly, been claimed to be merely an "ideological construct" (Besnier, 1994:283) which results from the application of "context-specific norms of interaction" (Besnier 1994:286).

Very convincing arguments have been put forward in support of the view that textual autonomy is a myth since context⁴ is very much a factor to contend with (Nystrand, 1987:197; Farr, 1993:11; Coulter, 1994:690; Street, 1984; Baynham, 1995:25; Fowler, 1991:90), even in scientific discourse, the ultimate in 'detached', 'factual' writing (Besnier, 1994; Geisler, 1994; Crismore and Farnsworth, 1990; Haas, 1995; Nash, 1990; Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984). As Nystrand (1987:197) explains, "a text is explicit not because it says everything all by itself, but rather because it strikes a careful balance between what needs to be said and what may be assumed"; a balance, in other words, between text and context. He is supported in this view by Farr (1993:32) who maintains that what is not said is often

an "essential aspect of the reasoning process" which "has been left unsaid because the writer or speaker may have assumed it to be shared background knowledge".

When an academic text works, Nystrand (1987:205) argues, it is not because it is "independent of its context of use, but because it is so carefully attuned to this context". Coulter (1994:690), in turn, claims that to be considered a text at all, "Any text ... must, as a condition of its sheerly minimal intelligibility, *contain its own possibilities of contextualization*, set its own limits upon what a relevant context could possibly be for that text, and thus establish *a priori* the *kind of* contextual particulars that ... could illuminate its problematic component(s)".

For the emerging academic literate who has to contend with context from his very first exposure to written academic discourse, the perpetuation of the myth of textual autonomy is indeed dangerous. Ignorance of the possible effects of context on academic texts leaves him not only open to manipulation, but also exposed to failure to reach a fully functional degree of academic literacy.

4. What is academic literacy?

Academic literacy is a relative concept (Leong, 1989:18; Williams and Snipper, 1990:7; Baynham, 1995:6; Geisler, 1994:252; Duszak, 1994:291; Gambell, 1989:272; Street, 1984). As Farr (1993:11) explains, the "cognitive demands of being literate ... vary according to particular uses".⁵ For scientific literacy, for instance, Aikenhead (1989:249) regards intellectual independence" - which "assumes an array of intellectual skills and conceptual knowledge, as well as a *predisposition* towards critical reasoning" - as a "necessary co-requisite".

The degrees of academic literacy required to function successfully as an undergraduate, as a graduate, and as an academic professional, for example, differ vastly. Duszak (1994:293) and Geisler (1994:4) accordingly distinguish between novices and experts⁶ in academic

literacy. As Geisler (1994:81) says, the novice merely gets and displays academic knowledge, whereas, in addition, the academic expert creates and transforms academic knowledge.

Fully functional academic literacy obviously entails much more than the passive absorption of content (Street, 1984:14). It has been argued, in fact, that academic literacy needs to be both functional and critical (Baynham 1995:8): functional to address the "demands made on individuals in a given society" [here the academic community - H.M.], and critical (Aikenhead, 1989:249) to provide a "meta-level of critical awareness, both linguistic and social" (Baynham, *op. cit.*), or, as Haas (1994:45) calls it, a "meta-understanding of ... context and motives". Without this critical ability, the prospective academic literate will be able neither to evaluate textual information, nor to create and transform knowledge.

5. How is academic literacy acquired?

Street (1984:14) sees the acquisition of literacy as what Freire (1978) and MacKie (1980) call an "active process of consciousness". At the tertiary level this process entails learning "the patterns of knowing about, and behaving toward, texts within a disciplinary field" (Haas, 1994:43). But, learning how to behave appropriately toward texts in an academic environment is easier said than done, particularly since written academic discourse is not a homogeneous genre (Cooper and Greenbaum, 1990:7): Farr (1993:9), for instance, sees academic discourse as a 'register' within which there exists several genres.⁷ With its own special features, constraints and problems⁸, written discourse, in fact, makes its own demands on prospective academic literates. As Cooper and Greenbaum (*op. cit.*) explain, academic discourse "conventions vary with the discipline and with the degree of specialised knowledge that is assumed of the reader".

The newcomer to academic literacy supposedly has two options. The first: to learn the discourse conventions of his discipline uncritically, and the second: to acquire the

[academic discourse] conventions strategically and critically (Baynham, 1995:242). The first option more often than not leads - I would argue - to the newcomer's stagnation at some basic level of academic literacy with hardly more than the ability to read and write fairly 'un-complex' texts, in other words to get and display knowledge. The second option, I maintain, is much more likely to lead to an advanced enough level of academic literacy for the novice to become fully functional in a particular discipline, that is, able to apply the conventions knowledgeably and critically enough to create and transform knowledge. Unfortunately these 'options' are not always so optional, of course, since several factors over which the prospective academic literate has little or no control badly handicap the development of academic literacy. One such factor seriously constraining the student's ability to progress from passive absorption and mere regurgitation of content to active thinking and criticism is the notion that texts are autonomous.⁹

6. Why would the perpetuation of a myth of textual autonomy impede the development of academic literacy?

To become fully functional, as we have seen, the prospective academic literate needs to move on beyond mere comprehension and reproduction of content and progress to the point where he is able to appraise a text: to assess its assumptions and hypotheses (Haas, 1994: 45), to evaluate its claims and to place it within the larger setting of the discipline of which it forms a part (Aikenhead, 1989:249). He has to learn how to use his knowledge of that setting in his interpretation and critical evaluation of the text (Haas, 1994:79). To do that he needs to develop a critical awareness of the setting and of the numerous ways in which it can affect the "meaning, validity and usefulness" (Haas, 1994:45) of the information in the text.¹⁰

To be fully functional, then, the academic literate must know that the information in the text not only can be questioned, but also needs to be scrutinised very carefully in relation to

a surrounding context. He needs to realise that not only the form of these texts, but also their function and their meaning are said to be significantly influenced by their social context (Farr: 1993:11; Mauranen, 1993:1; Cooper, 1990:68; Street, 1984:89), that is, by the "discourse community" (Baynham, 1995:241-2; Gambell, 1989:270; and Williams and Snipper, 1990:6) in which reader, writer, text and meaning "co-exist" (Williams and Snipper, op. cit.).

This is where the problem comes in, however. If academic texts were to be regarded as context-free, as research has shown that indeed they are by novice academic literates (Haas 1994: 46; Geisler, 1994:85)¹¹, and if the myth of textual autonomy were to be preserved in secondary and tertiary institutions, as indeed it has been in many educational institutions (Geisler, 1994:5), the consequences could be tragic. One result, for instance, could be that not only beginning students believe the information in academic texts to be true because "the book says" so (Haas, 1994:61), but many graduate students, too. Another could be that many students find their critical abilities so hamstrung by their belief in textual autonomy that they are able to do no more than "regurgitate the approved interpretation [of a text] provided by their teacher and the other professional scholar-critics who had already unravelled the text's mysteries" (Mayher, 1990:22).

To find out why the perpetuation of the myth is so dangerous, then, we need to take a look at why and how context affects the academic text and, by implication, the aspirant to academic literacy.

7. Why does context influence text?

The academic discipline in which the academic literate has to function can be envisioned, to quote Gambell (1989:270), as a "discourse community where common understandings are both conceptual and linguistic". Such a discourse community, according to Baynham (1995:241) "shares a register and a set of institutional practices for communicating through

that register". The academic discourse community therefore functions as a context which affects the form and function (Street, 1984:89) as well as the meaning of a text. As Coulthard (1994:xi) explains, "written text is essentially interactive" and "gains part of its meaning from what has not been said". Within this discourse community context crucially affects not only linguistic choices (Carter, 1990:190), but even the "truth and falsity of statements", for example, when "what is judged true in a school book may not be so judged in a work of historical research" (Schiffrin, 1994:53).

Context affects meaning, because, as Nystrand (1982:76), Williams and Snipper (1990:7) and Emmott (1994:157) explain, a reader comprehends a text not by passively absorbing its meaning, but by actively "bringing knowledge to the text", that is, by applying context to interpret text. This does not mean, of course, that he can make any text mean anything he wants it to mean. It means that, psychologically, comprehension depends on the reader applying a schema¹² of background knowledge (Nystrand, 1982:76; Mayher, 1990:5), an "interpretive context" (Nystrand 1982:80) or "cognitive environment" (Sinclair and Winckler, 1992:14), to help him to interpret the text.

According to Cooper (1982:109) readers "use both their knowledge of linguistic and other conventions and their knowledge of the relevant aspects of context to assign meanings to texts". Nystrand (1982:17) explains that "we go about knowing things and making them known by relating them to other, comparable things". He (1986:19) quotes Rommetveit (1974:104) as saying that "what is made known by any particular statement can be assessed only by relating 'what is said' in a systematic fashion to what in each situation is tacitly and reciprocally presupposed".

8. How does context influence text?

In the academic text two kinds of context are relevant to what is said, namely linguistic context and situational context (Nystrand, 1982:19).

8.1 Linguistic context

An important factor in determining utterance meaning is linguistic context. Linguistic context includes the previous text; it also includes the way any particular statement is made (Nystrand, 1986:87).

Despite the apparent objectivity of academic texts, authors, as Nash (1990:29) says, have "constant resort to devices that project or protect" their personality so that even "in the apparently objective realm of scientific report and exposition, [they] find means of nudging their way into the argument". The academic writer is no exception: he, too, attempts to control,¹³ in absentia, as it were, what happens when the text is read. To do that, he uses metadiscourse which has also been described as "the linguistic and rhetorical manifestation of an author's presence in a text" in order to "direct rather than inform" readers (Crismore and Farnsworth, 1990:119). In this formulation, critical readers could, of course, replace "direct" by "control" or "manipulate".¹⁴ With metadiscourse the author can unobtrusively introduce his own opinion into the text, for instance, or protect himself against too strongly phrased claims or propositions (Nash, 1990:23; Crismore and Farnsworth, 1990:118; Geisler, 1994:11). According to Geisler (1994:25) scientific text, for example, is "unusually laden" with such metadiscourse.

The uninformed student probably will be aware of only the most obvious of the two levels of text which, according to Crismore and Farnsworth (1990:119), Vande Kopple (1985) claims many texts to have. He will probably be aware, that is, of only that level at which the author supplies information about the subject of the text, in other words, "expands

propositional content". He will probably not be aware, however, of the other one, the metadiscourse level, at which the author does not add propositional material, but helps his readers "to organise, classify, interpret, evaluate and react to such propositional material" (Crismore and Farnsworth, op.cit.). He might not realise, even, that modality, as a concomitant or a component of metadiscourse (Nash, 1990:23-24), is commonly used in academic discourse "to express ... a degree of commitment to the statements" the author makes (Nash, 1990:4) by very subtly qualifying propositions and moderating claims. He might not know enough about such rhetorical devices to recognise, in the author's unobtrusive evaluation of the claims (Carter, 1990:189), the intrusion of context into the text.¹⁵ He might not realise, either, that metalanguage could provide him with tools with which to "extend, question, or even overturn the claims in the text" (Geisler, 1994:14). This would be unfortunate, because, as Geisler (op. cit.) says, "it is precisely this metadiscourse ... that enables readers to determine the appropriate level of certainty to grant the claims the text contains".

8.2 Situational context

Several factors combine to form the situational context which affects the text.

8.2.1 Background knowledge

Let us look, first, at a less obvious form of situational context: the reader's background knowledge. As Glatt (1982:101) maintains, any writer has to keep in mind the "audience's familiarity or previous knowledge about the topic of discourse" to determine "how much background and detailed information to include in his text".¹⁶ The problem, according to Stubbs (1982:31), is that with academic articles the audience is not always known. The author may not always know, then, what to include and what to exclude. And the immature

academic literate with his limited subject knowledge may not be able to fill in enough of the 'blanks' to interpret the text.

Another problem for the prospective academic literate is that he may be unable to interpret a text if he does not have access to the relevant background knowledge or interpretive context because his cultural identity (Farr 1993:11) - the complex product of his background, experience, education, values, critical beliefs, ideology, etc. (Williams and Snipper, 1990:6; Nystrand, 1986:87) - and therefore the knowledge and the set of presuppositions that he brings to the text,¹⁷ differ from that assumed or expected by the writer (Baynham, 1995:190).

8.2.1.1 Academic discourse conventions

As Haas (1994:45) points out, part of disciplinary education is to learn about the nature of academic discourse. Knowledge of the disciplinary and genre conventions (Carter, 1990:190; Gambell, 1989:279) therefore is an important component of the reader's background knowledge.¹⁸ So is acquiring the special language of academic discourse (Gambell, 1989:282; Olson, 1989:11) in which "technical terms generally represent concepts".

A potential problem is that, since newcomers to academic literacy are neither "blank slates" (Farr, 1993:6), nor exist in a "vacuum" (Williams and Snipper, 1990:6), they may, for instance, "bring with them knowledge of discourse conventions that differ" from those of the academic environment in which they need to function (Mauranen, 1993:255; Duszak, 1994: 291; Farr, 1993:5). Consider, for example, students who come from a non-mainstream educational background¹⁹ or from a sociolinguistic environment in which the norms of Western academic writing do not apply.²⁰ Consider, too, students educated in a setting that does not adequately prepare them for functioning in Western academic literacy.²¹ Such students will be at a disadvantage not only when they have to interpret

information presented according to Western academic discourse norms, but also when they have to produce academic texts within such constraints (Farr, 1993:13; Duszak, 1994:291, 294-5; Mauranen, 1993:1; Maartens, 1996:125). For, as Kidd (1996:286) says, in order to function as academic literates "ESL students [and I maintain *all* students - H.M.] need to be taught not only forms of language "but also how to use language for accomplishing academic tasks".

8.2.1.2 The content of the discipline

Knowledge of the content of the discipline is the more obvious part of the background knowledge needed for the interpretation of an academic text. As Paul and Charney (1995:397) say, "new ideas can be understood only in relation to assimilated disciplinary knowledge". For the reader to understand information - that is, for the reader to recognize a new idea as "relevant, interesting, and important" - the text must therefore contain enough old, shared ideas as a context against which the new idea can be tested. Advanced academic literates have accumulated extensive background knowledge of the content and the context of surrounding texts from their reading and writing in that discipline. This enables them to comprehend new ideas by, for instance, merely using the standard terminology of the discipline to access or activate the relevant schemas of background knowledge they have thus gained (MacDonald, 1990:43).²²

The newcomer may be at a double disadvantage, however, since he may not be familiar enough with either the content or the terminology of the discipline to have access to such schemas. And breakdowns in communication between the academic writer and his reader often occur precisely because the writer's "attempted implicatures rely on contextual knowledge that [the reader does] not possess" (Cooper, 1982:127). As Nystrand (1982:65) so aptly puts it, "When writers misjudge what their readers know, communication will break down" .

8.2.2 The historical setting

Another part of the situational context of any text is its 'historical' setting. One of the most important tasks of the academic writer is to "establish a niche" (Duszak, 1994:298) or "codify a context" (Geisler, 1994:15) for his work (Paul and Charney, 1995:398; Nystrand, 1987:203). This he does, as Geisler (op. cit.) says, by identifying the previous literature "into which [he sees] his work fitting". And this he must do convincingly enough that his work be seen as a "natural extension of the field's current state of knowledge" (Geisler, op. cit.; Paul and Charney, 1995:399).

The codifying of a context of course provides a golden opportunity for 'manipulating' the reader by what Paul (1991) calls "shaping and revising the context" (Paul and Charney, 1995:398); in other words, by the author carefully selecting the citations and references so as to create what he sees as a 'suitable' historical context for his work.²³

The danger is that the prospective academic literate may not realise that, despite such lofty academic discourse ideals as the scrupulous pursuit of "truth in argument and narration, strict accuracy in ascertainable fact", etc. (Nash, 1990:28), academic writers are human and the object of writing is persuasion (Farr, 1993:9; Haas, 1994:44; Nash, 1990:25; Paul and Charney, 1995:397; Mauranen, 1993:1, 35; Geisler, 1994:87). He may not realise, then, that he is not seeing the 'whole picture', but only a portion, meticulously selected by the author himself. He needs to realise, though, that "a text is an utterance, part of an intertextual context consisting of closely and distantly related texts" (Haas, 1994:48; Baynham, 1995:135). He needs to know, too, that a "text may draw upon, extend, or refute a myriad of other texts, whether these texts are directly cited or not" (Haas, op. cit.). The newcomer's background knowledge, so small in relation to that of the expert, will not provide the wider, unmentioned context which he needs to access in order to be able to judge the validity and usefulness of the content of a given text. According to Haas

(1994:46, 61), this is because the newcomer lacks the "rhetorical reading strategies" advanced academic literates use to "reconstruct the context in which a text was produced" (Geisler, 1994:23).

So, context has been discovered to be alive and well and very much an integral part of written academic discourse. But, where does this 'discovery' leave the immature academic literate? Not much the wiser, unfortunately, since the myth of the autonomous text is being kept as alive and well.

9. The perpetuation of the myth of textual autonomy

The myth of the autonomous text is being perpetuated in the following ways:

9.1 Academic discourse features

The features of academic discourse itself (Haas, 1994:46; Farr, 1993:9) help to perpetuate the myth. To the unguided student the detached, seemingly authorless Western academic style certainly makes the content of texts appear to be "beyond human question" (Haas, 1994:46). Academics reinforce this misconception: when they write for fellow experts, they are apt to use a lot of metadiscourse to moderate their claims and protect themselves, but when they write for novices, they state claims much more boldly and so create the impression that these claims are unassailable facts (Geisler, 1994: 12, 14).²⁴ And unfortunately, to the reader with "no additional knowledge beyond the text", in other words to the reader who relies on the text as all there is, like the novice academic literate, "all claims look equally plausible and equally true" (Geisler, 1994:14).

9.2 Teaching system

The impression of textual autonomy is further reinforced by a teaching system that encourages students to regard the academic text as the "autonomous authority for academic knowledge" (Geisler, 1994:36). Consider, for instance, the all too common model of "transmission" - rather than "interpretive" - teaching (Gambell, 1989:270): here, first the teacher, and subsequently the student, "who is expected to function as a kind of recording and playback device" (Mayher, 1990:72), merely structures, organizes and reproduces "essentially unchanged" (Mayher, op. cit.) the information in the text. When on top of that the student is encouraged not to think but to "memorize what the book says" (Haas, 1994:61-62; Gambell, op. cit.) and to adhere as closely as possible to the source text (Geisler, 1994:51) as the "fully explicit source for academic knowledge" (Geisler, 1994:33), and is even "graded for [his] compliance with this expectation" (Geisler, 1994:51), it is not surprising that the prospective academic literate comes to see texts as "the ultimate authority" (Haas, 1994:61): as no less than autonomous "repositories of factual information" (Haas, 1994:46; Geisler, 1994:85). It is not surprising, either, that such students are bewildered when the "answers to this class are not in the back of the book... or ... within the text either" (Cooper, 1990:65).

The result of this type of teaching²⁵ - I maintain - is that far too few teachers and lecturers challenge their students to go beyond the text, to consider the wider context in which the text is embedded, in the attempt - academically indispensable - to assess the text's claims accurately. And that far too many stifle the emerging critical awareness of the inquisitive student by telling him not to worry because everything he needs to know is in the book (Farr, 1993:5).²⁶

Small wonder, then, that Geisler (1994:51) found "knowledge-getting" and "knowledge-telling" to be the "most common models followed by students in school". And that she

(1994:93) should ask: "After 14 years of being taught that the text has all the answers, is it any surprise that some students find it hard to understand that ... they must ask about the author's purpose and context in order to use knowledge productively?"

For "knowledge-transforming" (Geisler, 1994:51) to be possible, in other words for academic literates to be able to do something academic with the textual information, they would need to be encouraged to see the text as being embedded within a cultural, a situational, as well as a historical context (Haas, 1994:48) which may affect not only its meaning but also its merit. In fact, as Haas (1994:44) says, the prospective academic literate should be encouraged to see texts "not as static, autonomous entities but as forms of dynamic rhetorical action" determined by context.

10. Consequences of the perpetuation of the myth

Since this type of encouragement is not the rule, however, many novice academic literates never realise that the text is not all there is and that texts do not mean only what texts say. To be critically aware, *the academic literate needs to know that the academic text reflects, however obliquely, the author's view, insights, and preferences or prejudices.* Otherwise he may quite easily mistake the 'detachedness' of academic style for true objectivity and so be misled into believing each academic discourse to be an "impersonal statement of facts that all add up to the truth" - precisely the sort of error that Crismore and Farnsworth (1990:118) speak of when they warn of the notion of textual autonomy being a "very dangerous myth".

The perpetuation of the myth of a context-free, fully explicit text, then, prevents many aspirants to academic literacy from moving on beyond the ability to get and display knowledge and progressing to the "meta-level of critical awareness" (Baynham, 1995:8) which would enable them to be fully functional academic literates, able also to create and transform academic knowledge.

11. Conclusion

It is within the framework of concepts such as those above that one could start planning a series of empirical investigations of

- * representative texts of prospective academic literates
- * didactic steps aimed at improving them
- * the effects of such steps
- * the relationship between these effects and the contents of the theoretical rationale behind such didactic interventions
- * the extent to which the progression in literacy practices from those of the novice to those of the expert is hampered or even arrested by the perpetuation of the myth of textual autonomy.

In such a way, one would hope, linguistics and linguistic research could then indeed provide the 'intellectual base' for a "better understanding of effective learning" and for the "further development of informed teaching" (Stevens, 1988:299).

Notes

- I would like to thank Walter Winckler for valuable discussions, comments and advice.
- 1. Cf. Geisler (1994:4-7) for a brief history of the development of the notion/ideal of the autonomous text. Cf., also, Street (1984:1-65) for a critical look at the 'strong' version of what he calls the "autonomous model of literacy" based on the notion of the "autonomous text" as espoused by Olson, Greenfield, Hildyard and Goody. See also Street (1984, Ch. 3) for his analysis of their views in terms of linguistic theory.

2. Cf. Olson (1989:5-12) and Ong (1992:307-310) for their views on "fixed texts" and the relationship between literacy and thought. Cf., also, Nystrand (1986:45-46 and 1987); Farr (1993), Geisler (1994:4-10), and Street (1993:5-15) for the opposing views on context-free and autonomous texts.
3. Cf. Geisler (1994:93) for the various ways in which she sees the notion of the autonomous text as being mythic: namely as a 'false' myth, as a 'driving' myth, and as a 'regulating' myth.
4. Cf. Sinclair (1992:106-123) for a discussion of the nature of context, as well as for a brief introduction to Relevance Theory and the "insight into the role of context in utterance interpretation" it is claimed to have led to (Sinclair, 1992:18).
5. Cf. Aikenhead (1989:251-2) for a model of the dimensions of scientific literacy, for instance.
6. Cf. Geisler (1994:240) for her view of expertise in academic literacy - she sees expertise as "the ability to negotiate three distinct worlds of discourse".
7. Cf. Mauranen (1993:9-40) for a discussion of linguistic and non-linguistic approaches to genre, register and rhetoric and of their roles in the production of academic discourse.
8. Cf. Farr (1993: 8-9) for a discussion of the characteristics of written academic discourse. A characteristic of particular concern to this paper is the "fictionalization of author and audience". Cf., also, Nash (1990:28-9).
9. Cf. Geisler (1994:26, 93) and Nystrand (1987:197-202) for an enlightening discussion of the implications and complications of pursuing the notion of textual autonomy.
10. Cf. Blakemore (1992:16-22) for an explication of the role of context in utterance interpretation. Cf. also Haas (1994:45) for a discussion of the effect of context on the meaning, validity and usefulness of texts.

11. Cf. Geisler (1994:84-88) for a discussion of the relationship between the development of what she calls "two problem spaces in the academy", the domain content and the rhetorical process problem spaces - both of which play an important role in the development of academic literacy.
12. Cf. Baynham (1995:13-14) for his view on the involvement of mental models or schemas in discourse interpretation. Cf. also Van Dijk (1987:161-165).
13. Cf. Geisler (1994:25) for an explanation of the way authors attempt to manipulate readers by codifying a context and by creating a step-by-step guide for interpretation.
14. Cf. Fairclough (1992:122-3) for a discussion of the implications of the use of metadiscourse and control and manipulation. See also Nash (1990:24) and Crismore and Farnsworth (1990:119-124).
15. Cf. Fairclough (1992:159-162) and Fowler (1991:85) for a discussion of the relationship between modality, subjectivity and objectivity and writer commitment to propositions.
16. Cf. Glatt (1982:88-94 and 101) for an explication of the given-new contract between writer and reader. Cf., also, Nash (1990:13-23) for an explanation of the tacit contracts between writer and peers, and between writer and student. Cf., also, Nystrand (1987:205) for the compositional tasks imposed on the writer by the writer-reader contract.
17. Cf. Sinclair, M. and Winckler, W.K. (1991:14-20) for an explanation of Sperber and Wilson's relevance theoretical views on the different 'cognitive environments' involved in utterance interpretation.
18. Cf. Baynham (1995:239-244) for a discussion of the potential social consequences of acquiring certain discourse conventions.
19. Cf. Duszak (1994:291). As she says, "more and more non-native speakers of [English] are turning to communicating in written academic English. Then ... it

may happen that they transmit discorsal patterns typical of their own tongue but alien to English".

20. Cf. Street (1984:89) for the non-Western literacy practices of the Chipewyan, for instance.
21. Cf. Kidd (1996:296), Maartens (1996:125) and Farr (1993) for discussions on the needs of students to have the conventions for academic discourse explicitly taught to them.
22. Cf. Van Dijk's (1987:161-165) discussion of models "that play an important role in written discourse processing".
23. Cf. Paul and Charney (1995:397-399) and Duszak, (1994:297-298) for a discussion of how writers go about establishing a context for their work.
24. Cf. Haas (1994:44) for a discussion of how scientists, for instance, adjust the strength of their propositions to suit the audience.
25. Cf. Mayher (1990) for a critical look at what he calls the "common sense" model of teaching, and for his exposition of an alternative, the "uncommon sense" model. See, also, his (1990:139-146) criticism of the Code Theory Model and the consequences of its application in language teaching, and his (1990:153-155) discussion of Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory as having "powerful implications for language education".
26. Cf. Randhawa (1989:59) for a discussion of what a student needs to be taught in order to develop the critical ability to evaluate text within context.

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