Forsiden viser sprogforskeren Rasmus Kristian Rask (1787-1832),
modelleret af billedhuggeren Andreas Paulsen i 1882.
Statuen tilhører Fyns Kunstmuseum og er deponeret på
Odense Universitetsbibliotek.

Cover illustration: Statue of Rasmus Kristian Rask (1787-1832),
the Danish linguist, sculptured by Andreas Paulsen 1882.
The sculpture belongs to Fyns Kunstmuseum,
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WHO'S AFRAID OF PAUL GRICE? THE ROLE OF THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE IN ACADEMIC METADISCOURSE

by
Cornelia Ilie

> 'Now may I sing the King-fisher Song?' [said Bruno]
> 'Geography next,' said Sylvie. 'Don't you know the rules?'
> 'I think there oughtn't to be such a lot of rules, Sylvie! I thinks --- '
> 'Yes, there *ought* to be such a lot of rules, you wicked, wicked boy! And how dare you *think* at all about it? And shut up that mouth directly!'
> (Bruno's Lesson, from Lewis Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, 1996:478-9)

1. Introduction

Academic textual practices have evolved as an instrument used for constructing knowledge claims, fostering ideas, identifying categories and concepts, as well as for developing relevant distinctions. Reading and discussing academic texts involves understanding how thoughts are shaped, how issues are defined, how explanations are constructed, and how inferences are made explicit. Academic texts represent an important source of information that is shared by, and unites, the members of a community gathered around a particular discipline. In their communicative and cognitive dimensions, these texts contribute to shaping the way in which academics relate to the investigated topic and to each other as professionals.

Far from being homogeneous, the genre of academic writing includes several subgenres of academic texts, which can be differentiated according to specific constraints that they have to obey and according to the specific reader expectations that they have to meet (see further below, section 4). This paper explores the ways in which text-related rules interact or interfere with discourse-related principles in the construction of academic texts. The discussion will focus on a classical text, i.e. Grice's 1975 article 'Logic and conversation', in particular on its use as a theoretical tool in linguistic pragmatics and on its representations in several academic textbooks. The latter often constitute the primary academic tools that students become familiar

with when starting to explore a particular linguistic discipline. The use of such a tool carries the risk that the always somehow derivative information provided by the textbooks will be treated as equivalent to the information conveyed by the original academic books and research articles. This misconception can be dispelled by teachers and tutors, who should introduce the textbooks with appropriate qualifications as to their form and exhaustiveness, as well as with concrete recommendations and even, when necessary, the requirement to consult the original academic works.

2. Aims

A major aim of this paper is to highlight the need for an increased awareness of the varying requirements concerning goal- and audience-oriented metadiscourse in academic texts. Two particular aspects of this metadiscourse are discussed, namely, on the one hand, the academic writer's relation to his/her text in terms of the virtual dialogue with previous academic writers of related texts (often referred to under the label of 'intertextuality'), and, on the other, the academic writer's role as a mediator between his/her own text and the expected readership.

The Gricean Cooperative Principle was chosen as an appropriate illustration of the way in which academic course designers (mainly for teaching purposes) interpret, and sometimes misinterpret, a theoretical academic text and its major metadiscursive strategies. The present analysis has been carried out in terms of a comparative approach. First, a comparison is made between the metadiscursive markers in the author's original article and those in eight of its textbook representations, in order to reveal some of the recurring sources of over- and underinterpretation. Next, Grice's presentation of the Cooperative Principle is compared with the presentation (and sometimes misrepresentation) of the same principle by the authors of the eight examined textbooks. In the first case, the analysis focuses on a close text reading and critical interpretation of the functions of the metadiscourse. In the second case, the analysis focuses on the authors' varying ways of understanding and actualizing Grice's text, starting with the meaning of his key words 'rule', 'maxim', and 'principle'. The rationale here is that having a grasp of the relevant distinctions in the use of the basic key words of a theory contributes

to developing a more analytical mind and a more discerning spirit, when it comes to dealing with different descriptions and interpretations of one and the same theoretical approach.

3. Rules versus principles

The consultation of academic books and textbooks is a process that requires, and often presupposes, beyond the mere skills of data collecting and classifying, a theoretically trained mind, a keen sense of observation, and a critical attitude. Students in the humanities are expected to be able to distinguish and evaluate diverse sources of academic knowledge when writing their academic essays. Often, it is thought more convenient to look for information in the more accessible outlines and brief summaries provided by textbooks than to turn to the more elaborate reasoning of original academic texts. This article is a plea for a more professional presentation of classical linguistics texts: one that is more faithful and accurate, and illustrated with essential quotations. Far too often, academic textbooks tend to describe concepts and theories either as eternal truths or as distinctive and quantifiable facts. This explains why students find it easier to follow explicitly stated textbook *rules*, rather than gradually discovering the underlying *principles* of academic writing. There is actually a need for both academic books and textbooks, but the relation between the two should be one of complementarity and not of exclusion (compare the linguistic relation between rules and principles, discussed below).

Upon reading endless pages of undergraduate student essays, a supervisor gradually realizes that some writing problems are more common than others. One of these concerns the appropriate selection and critical scrutiny of the reference literature. Providing students with detailed guidebooks and systematic writing instructions is undoubtedly useful, but far from sufficient. In other words, reading a textbook should not substitute for reading the original work(s) that it is based on. The exposure to the way of reasoning, the argumentative strategies, and the discursive practices of established academic works cannot be overestimated; especially, wider exposure to various subgenres of academic writing (see section 4, below) can help students in at least two ways. Firstly, internalizing several writing principles, rather than slavishly applying simplified and decon-

textualized rules, will help them acquire the skills required by specific academic writing assignments. Secondly, they will better learn how to identify the similarities and differences between different subgenres of academic texts.

Consider how academic texts are planned, linguistically and pragmatically. What is the relation between content and expression at various levels and stages in the process of academic writing? One of the basic skills of experienced academic writers is knowing how to apply *linguistic rules*, in particular text-related guidelines for structuring texts, ordering paragraphs, and defining issues (in the text or in footnotes). The use of these linguistic rules should be accompanied by the application of *pragmatic principles*, including discipline-related assumptions about how to refer to, or infer, shared knowledge; to what degree the author's attitude should be made manifest; and how evidentiality should be made more or less explicit. Understanding how the grammar rules cohabit with the pragmatic principles of language use is a necessary prerequisite for writing effective and reader-friendly texts.

Irrespective of whether they apply to oral or written communication, rules and principles work differently and for different purposes, but without being incompatible. Leech (1983), Mey (1993 /2001), and Thomas (1997), among others, have discussed the distinctions related to the nature and functions of rules and principles. In differentiating rules from principles, Leech (1983:5) invokes conventionality, while Mey points primarily to predictability and regularity as significant criteria:

> The world of pragmatics is not predictable in the same way as morphological or syntactic worlds are. That is to say: no strict rules and conditions can be set up for a pragmatic universe, neither can any stringent hypotheses be formulated and tested that would create the illusion of a well-formed world, as it is done in a rule-based grammar ('regular' in the original sense of the word). (Mey 2001:182)

The same holds for the formal writing conventions underlying the structure of sentences and paragraphs, the citation style, and the reference system. A long writing tradition shows that *rules* are useful and should not be dismissed, but a caveat is in order: applying rules indiscriminately can lead to false interpretations and misconstructions, since the use of rules restricts the range of possible interpretations of the intended messages. As far as the pragmatics of writing is concerned, the reasoning process involved in academic writing relies largely on the use of *principles* that allow for a more open-ended applicability of theoretical approaches.

Searle makes a basic distinction between two different sorts of rules: regulative and constitutive. Whereas regulative rules 'regulate a pre-existing activity, an activity whose existence is logically independent of the rules', constitutive rules 'constitute (and also regulate) an activity the existence of which is logically dependent on the rules' (Searle, 1969:34). Drawing on Searle's observation, Leech distinguishes between the regulative nature of pragmatic principles and the constitutive nature of grammatical rules (1983:21). And based on Leech's distinction, Thomas (1997) has spelt out five basic differences between rules and principles, all of which are relevant to the present discussion, to wit:

(i) Rules are all or nothing, principles are more or less. (1997: 108)

In other words, a rule is either in operation or it isn't. For example, either you apply the rule of subject-verb concord or you don't. Principles, such as the Gricean Cooperative Principle, on the other hand, can apply to varying degrees: the maxim of manner presupposes that you can speak extremely clearly, fairly clearly, or not at all clearly.

(ii) Rules are exclusive, principles can co-occur. (1997:108)

According to Thomas, 'rules are exclusive in the sense that invoking one rule precludes invoking another' (ibid.). She illustrates this by referring to the functions of English gender-based pronouns: the use of *he* precludes the use of *she* when replacing nouns referring to a male person. In contrast, she argues that in pragmatics, two or more principles can be invoked simultaneously, so that for instance the maxims of Manner and Quantity can both be observed at the same time.

(iii) Rules are constitutive, principles are regulative. (1997:109)

Thomas draws here a parallel between descriptive grammars, which provide constitutive rules concerning the grammatical well-formedness of sentences in a given language, and a pragmatic description of that same language specifying the maxims and principles that govern the way people make choices from within the grammatical system in order to achieve their goals.

(iv) Rules are definite, principles are probabilistic. (1997: 110)

According to Thomas, 'in grammar, the aim is to devise rules which have no (or very few) counter-examples', whereas 'in pragmatics, we cannot say with absolute certainty what something means or what effect an utterance will have' (ibid.).

(v) Rules are conventional (arbitrary), principles are motivated. (1997:111)

The fact that *'Amn't I?', for example, might be regarded as grammatically more consistent than 'aren't I?' does not matter when it comes to formulating rules. Pragmatic principles, on the other hand, are motivated. 'If people find that they are more likely to achieve their aims if they speak politely, clearly and to the point, they will do so' (1997:111-112).

4. The academic genre: textbooks vs. research publications

Can we talk, and in what sense, of academic texts as an independent *genre*?

A functional definition of the notion of genre is due to Swales:

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. [...] In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. (1990:58)

Many of the generally acknowledged features of university textbooks, academic books, and research articles are to be regarded not as referring to discrete categories, but rather as gradable points on a continuum, representing particular subgenres of a particular genre called academic writing.

The notion of *subgenre* is dealt with in more detail by Bhatia (1993), who focuses on the different communicative purposes and writing strategies distinguishing a genre's various subgenres. In particular, academic textbooks, as a specific subgenre of academic texts, provide students with a basic conceptual framework and with a clear understanding of the outstanding issues in a particular academic field as well as of the different ways of problematizing them.

Another subgenre is represented by academic research publications; their role is to help students to acquire more advanced discipline-specific skills in critical thinking and persuasive writing. The process of acquiring these skills marks the students' transition from the stage of knowledge-consumers to the stage of knowledge-seekers and knowledge-shapers.

Textbooks, as yet another subgenre, may be distinguished from other academic books and research articles primarily in terms of goals and audiences. With respect to goals, textbooks are often treated as a sort of academic digest, a basic store of standardized knowledge; in contrast, research publications (books and articles) are seen as highly specialized and less accessible academic works.

In practice, however, neither description need necessarily be exclusive. The authors of academic books and research articles usually assume that their readers possess a certain amount of shared knowledge of a set of texts and of the rules and principles that operate in their academic discipline. Textbook authors, on the other hand, cannot realistically assume too much shared knowledge or metadiscursive awareness among their readers; these authors are primarily addressing academic novices who are in the process of getting socialized into the reasoning and writing practices of the discipline. A preliminary schema of the distinctions between these two subgenres of academic texts is presented in Table 1:

	Academic Textbooks	Research Publications
Functions	(i) to provide essential information and to systematize available knowledge primarily for a generally uninitiated, or less informed, readership (ii) to enable and/or facilitate the understanding, acquisition, and processing of disciplinary knowledge	(i) to critically analyze disciplinary knowledge, to construct and negotiate theoretical claims for a readership generally presupposed to be well-informed (including the developing academics) (ii) to increase awareness of, or adherence to, certain thinking paradigms, while refuting others
Audience	relatively broad and eclectic in terms of experience of academic discourse, viz. students (primary audience), teachers, and academic scholars (secondary audience)	a relatively well-informed community of disciplinary scholars and fellow academics (primary audience), but also students (secondary audience)
Goals	to initiate beginning and somewhat advanced students into the literacy of a particular discipline, by presenting key notions, issues, and theoretical perspectives	to share, examine, and discuss disciplinary knowledge and research results with fellow academics and advanced students, as well as to advance /refute theoretical approaches
Features	usually authoritative, occasionally probing and exploring	partly authoritative, but mainly exploratory and cautiously probing

Table 1. Basic distinctions between academic textbooks and research publications

As already pointed out, there is no clear-cut borderline between the two subgenres of academic texts outlined in Table 1, for the simple reason that some academic books and research articles can be used as

textbooks without originally having been written for that purpose (much like Grice's articles), while others are actually meant to be used as textbooks as well. This results in an increasing degree of heterogeneity within the subgenre of academic textbooks (see sections 7.1 and 7.2 for a more detailed discussion).

Two of the parameters used above, i.e. 'audience' and 'goals', are particularly relevant to the present discussion. A scholar's sense of readership is critical for gaining acceptance for his/her academic claims: it presupposes an implicit dialogue with his/her peers during the writing process. Any professional writer should consider the potential reactions of the readership, anticipating their background knowledge, processing problems, interests, and interpersonal dynamics. Academic writers in particular should be able to obviate possible refutations of their claims by expressing their statements with accuracy and caution, and by taking care not to present their claims as well-established truths. Evaluations and judgments should be suitably hedged against expected counterarguments. A scholar's goal orientation is also decisive in his/her setting up of a consistent reasoning strategy, all the time acknowledging the possibility of alternative approaches. After all, academic writing is a persuasive effort, the effectiveness of which depends on the writers' capacity to analyze and accommodate the needs and expectations of their readers.

5. Metadiscursive strategies in academic writing

An essential task of academic writers is to inform their readers and to persuade them of the plausibility of their statements. To what extent is academic writing conceived of as communicative interaction and to what extent is it envisaged as a cognitive process? The *communicative* functions of writing as a dialogue between an addresser and an addressee can be accounted for to a certain extent by the Gricean Principle of Cooperation. The *cognitive* functions of writing as a mental process of discovery can partly be highlighted by patterns of inductive and deductive reasoning.

The way in which writers intervene in their own texts to organize their arguments and to represent themselves, their relation to their readers, and their own scholarly attitudes is largely accomplished through *metadiscourse*. The term literally means 'discourse about

discourse'; it refers to an author's direct and indirect intervention in the text, with a view to organizing and structuring it. The various metadiscursive strategies employed by authors serve to correlate the communicative and cognitive processes at work in writing. The analysis of these strategies will enable us to examine not only the writers' conception of goal and audience, but also to show how this conception is signaled by means of specific metadiscursive markers.

Here, we are dealing with the difference between *textual* metadiscourse and *interpersonal* metadiscourse, as originally proposed by Vande Kopple (1985); based on this distinction, Crismore (1989) offers the following definition of metadiscourse:

> [...] we can say metadiscourse is a rhetorical act – writing used to guide and direct the reader, to signal the presence of the author, and to call attention to the speech act itself. (1989:7)

For the purposes of the present analysis, I have focused on two of the metadiscursive categories used by Hyland (1999), who further developed Vande Kopple's and Crismore's definitions. Textual metadiscourse (Crismore et al. 1993) now includes not only goal-oriented and readership-oriented writing strategies, but also inter-textuality-oriented strategies. Interpersonal metadiscourse includes strategies dealing not only with the relationship between writer and text and between writer and readership, but also with that between the writer and previous writers, on the one hand, and between the writer and the academic community, on the other. According to Hyland, textual metadiscourse is used to organize propositional information in ways that speak to a particular audience's need for coherence and are appropriate for a given purpose, whereas interpersonal metadiscourse allows writers to express their own perspective on the propositional information provided, as well as their attitude toward their readership.

While a metadiscursive schema can only approximate the complexity of language use, it does contribute to a more systematic and consistent comparison between different subgenres of academic text. Particularly significant for the present study are the markers of interpersonal metadiscourse, especially the ones signaling the degree of writer commitment and reader involvement. Hyland's analytical model comprises four categories of interpersonal metadiscursive markers, namely hedges, emphatics, attitude markers, and person

markers. Hedges and emphatics indicate 'the degree of commitment, certainty and collegial deference a writer wishes to convey, signaled by items such as *possible, may* and *clearly*' (Hyland 1999:8). Attitude markers convey the writer's affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to textual information; they express surprise, importance, and obligation, for example. Relational markers explicitly address readers, either to focus their attention or include them as discourse participants. Person markers signal the degree of author presence in the text, as indexed by the frequency of first person pronouns. (There are obvious overlaps between these categories, since writers often appeal to readers both in affective and in epistemic terms).

The categories of interpersonal metadiscourse which have proved most relevant to the discussion of rules vs. principles in connection with Grice's Principle of Cooperation are: validity markers (hedges, emphatics), attitude markers, and person markers. The next section will treat of these markers and their relation to the Gricean maxims.

6. An examination of Grice's metadiscursive strategies

In order to show how the message of academic texts is represented, interpreted, and sometimes even distorted in textbooks, I have chosen to compare the metadiscursive devices used by Grice himself and those used by the authors of eight books on linguistics and/or pragmatics. At issue here is the relevance of metadiscourse to the readability and usability of academic writing. An appropriate understanding and interpretation of the Gricean Cooperative Principle presupposes a careful examination of the metadiscursive statements made by Grice himself with reference to the assumptions, hypotheses, and proposals that he put forward.

The Berkeley philosopher Herbert Paul Grice presented his theory in a series of lectures in 1969. Part of the material was subsequently published in 1975 in an article called 'Logic and Conversation', which will be the focus of my discussion. What Grice presents in this short article has proved to be one of the most influential theories in the development of pragmatics (constantly quoted, but also occasionally misunderstood). Grice assumes that conversation is a cooperative activity, governed by identifiable strategies. In order to explain how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, i.e. from the level of expressed meaning to the level

of implied meaning, Grice introduced the Cooperative Principle and its attendant four conversational maxims.

The Cooperative Principle is relevant to academic writing, since academic scholars are always engaged in various kinds of written and spoken dialogue or 'conversation'; Grice's original text exhibits a first outline of his insights about mutual cooperation in conversation. Consider the following excerpts:

> *I wish to represent* a certain subclass of nonconventional implicatures, which *I shall call* CONVERSATIONAL implicatures, as being essentially connected with certain general features of discourse; so, *my next step is to try* to say what these features are.
> *The following may provide a first approximation to a general principle.* Our talk exchanges do not *normally* consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, *to some degree at least*, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, *to some extent*, a common purpose or set of common purposes, *or at least* a mutually accepted direction. [...] But at each stage, SOME possible conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable. *We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected (ceteris paribus) to observe*, namely: Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. *One might label that the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE.*
> *On the assumption that some such general principle as this is acceptable, one may perhaps distinguish four categories* under one or another of which will fall certain more specific maxims and submaxims, the following of which will, *in general*, yield results in accordance with the Cooperative Principle. Echoing Kant, *I call these categories* Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner. [...] (*The second maxim [of QUANTITY] is disputable*; [...]) Under the category of RELATION *I place a single maxim*, namely 'Be relevant'. [...] *I find the treatment of such questions exceedingly difficult, and I hope to revert to them in a later work.* [...] (1975:45-46; capitals in original, italics added)

In Grice's view, people engaged in conversational interaction start from the assumption that certain maxims are in operation, unless they receive indication to the contrary. On closer examination, the reader actually finds that in his own metadiscourse, Grice himself largely complies with the conversational maxims.

As we have seen, academic writers are expected to envisage the reactions of the expected audience, anticipating their background knowledge, processing problems, interests, and interpersonal dynamics, in order to provide the appropriate amount and sort of information. When listing the four categories of quantity, quality, relation, and manner, Grice mentions Kant as his source. In doing this, he either assumes that his readers know that Kant himself took over those categories from Aristotle, and then he is complying with one of the submaxims of quantity, namely 'Do not make your contribution more informative than is required'; alternatively, for another audience (who perhaps never have heard of Kant or Aristotle), his statement represents a violation of the submaxim of quantity that reads: 'Make your contribution as informative as is required'.

As a rule, academic writers should also be able to anticipate possible opposition to their claims by expressing their statements with accuracy and caution, and by taking care not to present their claims as well-established truths. Evaluations of ideas, facts, and data should be suitably hedged against possible refutation. In the excerpt quoted above, Grice complies with the maxim of quality by not saying that for which he lacks adequate evidence. This compliance is typically signaled by the use of hedges, such as modal verbs and downtoners: 'the following *may* provide *a first approximation*', 'We *might* then formulate a *rough* general principle', or restrictive adverbials: '*to some degree at least*', '*to some extent*'. Even more effective are the explicit metadiscursive comments that he makes on his own maxims: 'The second maxim is *disputable*'.

Grice also complies with the maxims of quality and relation by providing the reader with reliable and relevant evidence, often with the help of attitude markers: '*I find* the treatment of such questions *exceedingly difficult*, and *I hope* to revert to them in a later work' (ibid.:46; italics added). In his use of person markers, which are relatively frequent, he complies with the maxim of manner in that he avoids ambiguity and clarifies his statements: 'my next step', '*I call*

these categories', '*I include* the supermaxim' (ibid.:45), '*I have stated my* maxims', '*I list* briefly' (ibid.:47; italics added).

The following is a summary of the major interpersonal metadiscursive markers used by Grice in his basic description of the conversational maxims (1975:45-47):

Interpersonal metadiscursive devices	Examples of interpersonal metadiscursive devices
Validity markers	
(i) Hedges	'The following may provide', 'a first approximation', 'normally', 'to some degree at least', 'to some extent, or at least', 'We might then formulate', 'One might label', 'one may perhaps distinguish', 'in general' (p.45), 'it might be said' (p.46)
(ii) Emphatics	'It is obvious that', 'Indeed' (p.46)
Attitude markers	'The second maxim [of QUANTITY] is disputable', 'I find the treatment of such questions exceedingly difficult, and I hope to revert to them in a later work' (p.46)
Person markers	'which I shall call', 'my next step', 'I call these categories' (p.45), 'I place a single maxim', 'I include the supermaxim' (p.46), 'I have stated my maxims as if', 'I list briefly' (p.47)

Table 2. Interpersonal metadiscursive devices used by Grice

Validity markers signal various stances in the author's reasoning process: hedges indicate that the claims are made with caution and circumspection, whereas emphatics indicate that the claims have been properly tested or are generally accepted. Attitude markers signal the author's self-scrutinizing thinking process. Person markers signal the author's self-explicitating organizational and discursive moves that are intended to facilitate the reader's task.

7. An examination of metadiscursive strategies in academic textbooks

The Cooperative Principle has become such a widely accepted notion that books and textbooks in linguistics, and particularly pragmatics, cannot possibly omit it. Its popularity does not prevent, however, the occurrence of several sorts of interpretive deviations from Grice's original text.

As has already been mentioned, the subgenre of academic textbooks is not a homogeneous category. While the subgenre's audience, goals, and features may sometimes be comparable, its functions are more diverse than was shown in the preliminary schema in Table 1. In particular, interpersonal metadiscourse is instantiated differently in different academic (text)books depending on the author's background, target audience, and more specific goals, as we will show by examining the different ways in which Grice's Cooperative Principle is presented in eight academic works meant to be used as textbooks. Hedges, for example, are more common in (text)books that choose to not only present, but also discuss research issues, while conveying critical views and introducing new ideas or theories. Such new claims or hypotheses have to be substantially supported and appropriately argued for in order to be accepted as potential starting points for academic discussions.

The subgenres of academic books proper, on the one hand, and that of academic textbooks, on the other, represent the two prototypical extremes on the continuum of academic texts. In between there are many instances of overlapping. Some academic (text)books can be seen as more *interpretive* in that they take a more critical view of Grice's Cooperative Principle and its implications. Others are more *reportive* in that they offer a rather uncritical, sometimes even undiscerning, view of the same principle. Thus, disputable facts or claims of a theory often become uncontroversial

statements; in particular, the Cooperative Principle is frequently treated like a hard and fast rule.

The present analysis focuses on these two more or less distinguishable subcategories of academic textbooks, namely *reportive academic (text)books*, generally intended as basic course books, and *interpretive academic (text)books*, which are often intended for special or more advanced academic courses. A few of the common features of each of these two types of textbooks are specified in Table 3.

Interpretive academic textbooks	**Reportive academic textbooks**
(i) are normally intended as special /advanced course books	(i) are normally intended as basic course books
(ii) exhibit a more probing, principle-based orientation of academic thinking	(ii) exhibit a more conventional, rule-based orientation of academic thinking
(iii) present fairly critical, evaluative and/or challenging accounts, as well as systematic (re)considerations of previous theoretical approaches	(iii) present rather uncritical and simplified accounts of previous theoretical approaches
(iv) Disputable, but also less disputable or controversial, claims are normally called into question and reinterpreted.	(iv) Disputable facts and/or controversial claims can be presented as generally accepted truths.

Table 3. Two prototypical subcategories of academic textbooks

On examining four textbooks of the former type, it was disconcerting to discover smaller, but also larger, discrepancies between

Grice's original text and the textbooks' interpretations, and sometimes misinterpretations. Moreover, the metadiscursive devices used by the authors show that they often violate the very maxims that they are trying to define and explain. The situation is different in the case of the four interpretive textbooks that have been examined. In addition to presenting Grice's theory, their authors both evaluate and challenge the theory in an argumentative way. In sections 7.1 and 7.2, I will refer to each of the eight textbooks separately.

7.1. Reportive academic textbooks

The first text in the category of reportive academic textbooks is from a relatively well-known and extensively used textbook of linguistics, entitled *An Introduction to Language* (1974/93), by the late Victoria Fromkin and her co-author Robert Rodman. The 1993 edition of this book provides a strangely distorted and inaccurate picture of Grice's conversational maxims, not to mention that this, the most influential pragmatic theory, is included in the chapter on semantics (preceded by a section on the definite and indefinite articles in English, and followed by a section actually entitled 'Pragmatics' – which is rather astonishing, to say the least).

In statements such as the following, several maxims are violated at the same time. First, the maxim of quality is violated, as the authors totally misrepresent Grice's theory, mixing up his key terms 'maxim' and 'principle' and adding a new concept, namely 'conversational convention' (apparently a synonym for 'maxim of conversation'):

> Hamlet, who is feigning insanity, refuses to answer Polonius' questions 'in good faith'. *He has violated certain conversational conventions or maxims of conversation. One such maxim, the cooperative principle, states that a speaker's contribution to the discourse should be as informative as required – neither more nor less.* (1993:158; italics added)

Second, by treating the notion of 'convention' as equivalent to the notion of 'maxim' (which in its turn is treated as equivalent to the Cooperative Principle itself), the authors violate the maxim of manner. And while they try to observe the maxim of quality by

providing a specific example, ('one such maxim, the cooperative principle [...]', 'certain conversational conventions'), Fromkin and Rodman violate that same maxim by misleadingly defining the Cooperative Principle as the maxim of *quantity*.

Third, as to the maxim of quantity itself, this is violated in several ways: insufficient and faulty information is provided in that only one maxim is mentioned, viz. the maxim of relation (which the authors inaccurately call 'maxim of relevance', thus violating the maxim of manner as well). Moreover, the name Grice itself occurs only in an insignificant and incomplete footnote (at the bottom of page 158), as if the authors were apologizing for the extra informative load that they impose on the reader.

And finally, the maxim of manner is violated throughout the authors' sketchy presentation, in which unclear and disorderly formulations abound.

The second reportive textbook that was examined is *Conversation and Dialogues in Action* (1992), by Zoltán Dörnyei and Sarah Thurrell. Their chapter on conversational maxims struck us as oversimplifying the issues; often it is downright inaccurate. Consider the opening statement, in which the authors treat the 'maxims' as 'rules', without providing any valid motivation:

> In the 1970s, the philosopher Paul Grice put forward a set of general *rules* (he called them '*maxims*') to describe how participants 'cooperate' in conversation to achieve smooth and efficient interaction. (1992:81; italics added)

A serious inconsistency characterizes these authors' way of defining and using the Gricean key concepts. One of these concepts, viz. 'principle', has been given up almost entirely; that of 'maxim' is abandoned in favor of the arbitrarily introduced concept of 'rule'; as to the latter, it is used also in connection with the non-observance of the Gricean maxims: 'they break these *rules*' (compare: 'people deliberately violate these *principles*'; ibid.; italics added):

> *The maxims thus claim* that in efficient conversation it is assumed that the participants *will not lie or bluff, will not be too brief nor over-talkative, will not say completely irrelevant things* and will try to be as clear as possible. [...] However, *people are not perfect* and sometimes they break *these rules by accident*, through misunderstanding or clumsiness, which can result in the conversation going astray. There are also occasions when people deliberately *violate these principles for some reason*, usually to express some subtle meaning. (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1992:81; italics added)

Dörnyei and Thurrell are violating the maxim of quality when they emphatically assert that 'The maxims thus *claim* ...', when in fact Grice's formulation was only conveying certain expectations concerning the contributions of participants in a conversation. By their loose interpretation of the content and/or intentionality of Grice's maxims, the authors have succeeded more in breaking the maxims than in explaining them.

The authors further violate the maxim of manner by changing the order in which the maxims were presented by Grice (where 'quality' precedes 'quantity'). On page 107, the complete metamorphosis of maxims into rules has become an irreversible fact: 'four important conversational rules'. Even the names of the maxims have been changed in yet another violation of the maxim of manner: 'the truth rule' occurs instead of 'the maxim of quality', 'the relevance rule' instead of 'the maxim of relation', and 'the clarity rule' instead of 'the maxim of manner'. The authors also violate the maxim of relation by introducing a distinction that is not accounted for, namely that between 'breaking rules' and 'violating principles'.

The climax (or anti-climax, for that matter) is reached in a footnote at the bottom of page 107, which mentions that 'linguists refer to these four *rules* as Grice's conversational *maxims*' (italics added). This statement manages to violate three maxims at once, namely the maxim of quantity, by supplying more information than is required; the maxim of quality, by saying something for which the authors lack adequate evidence; and the maxim of relation, by wrongly establishing a relation of equivalence between two distinct concepts.

The third reportive textbook is *Realms of meaning: An introduction to semantics* (1997[1993]), by the late Thomas R. Hofmann. The author introduces the reader to Grice's theory in the chapter entitled 'Meaning and context'. However, he violates the maxims of quantity, quality, and relation from the very beginning by providing inaccurate background information, as well as establishing an indirect equivalence between 'maxims', on the one hand, and 'guidelines' and 'prescriptions', on the other:

> Although *they are phrased as a set of guidelines for how people should choose what to say*, the interesting point is that when these *maxims or prescriptions for good exchange of information* are violated, the listener attempts to find some non-literal meaning. (1997: 274; italics added)

In claiming the existence of six maxims, instead of four, Hofmann violates both the maxim of quantity and the maxim of quality. He also violates the maxims of quantity, quality, and manner, when he adds an (albeit slightly hedged) attitude marker to his claims, contrary to Grice's own statement ('the second maxim is disputable'):

> *The six maxims* originally proposed *remain essentially undisputed*, as below (*simplified slightly*), but some of them may be derived from more basic principles, and similar maxims of politeness have also been proposed.
>
> *Maxims* of quantity
>
> (1) Give as much information as is needed.
> (2) Give no more information than is needed.
>
> *Maxims* of quality
>
> (3) Do not say what you believe to be false.
> (4) Do not say what you have no evidence for.
>
> *Other maxims*
>
> (5) Be relevant.
> (6) Be perspicuous:
> (a) do not use obscure expressions.
> (b) do not use ambiguous expressions *unless necessary.*
> (c) be brief.
> (d) be orderly.
>
> Following *these rules* in talking would make for very boring conversations, if it did not stop them altogether. [...] The last one (6) is *a collection of rules* for explaining something and is not much involved in detecting non-literal uses of language, except as

> the last, orderliness, is related to relevance (5). (Hofmann 1997: 275; italics added)

Paradoxically, the number of maxims has increased in Hofmann's description from four to six, while at the same time two of Grice's maxims, i.e. the maxim of relation and the maxim of manner, have disappeared from Hofmann's text as maxims in their own right, only to resurface in the form of submaxims, collectively included in the category 'other maxims'. These unjustified changes are introduced by attitude markers which represent serious violations of the very maxims that they try to represent. The author also violates the maxim of quantity by providing more information than does the original text: '(b) do not use ambiguous expressions *unless necessary*'. Unlike Grice, he uses no person markers and no hedges (with the exception of the parenthetical 'simplified slightly'), which results in a violation of the maxims of quality and manner. When summing up the functions of the maxims, Hofmann adds one more violation when he refers to them as 'rules', instead of 'maxims'.

The fourth reportive textbook that was examined is *Linguistics* by Donna Jo Napoli (1996). She starts the chapter on semantics with a section on speech acts, followed by a section on the Cooperative Principle. Most surprisingly, her book (580 pages) contains no chapter devoted to pragmatics. The only mention of 'pragmatics' occurs in the chapter on semantics, at the end of the section on speech acts: 'There is much more that can be said about language use, what is called PRAGMATICS, and you can consult the references in the bibliography' (1996:456; capitals in original). In making this brief comment, the author is violating the maxims of quantity, quality, and manner, since no books or articles on pragmatics are listed in her bibliography.

Whereas Grice is deliberately tentative in putting forward his maxims, Napoli is very direct about her home-made description of the conversational maxims. Before even mentioning the maxims, she manages to violate two submaxims, namely the second submaxim of the maxim of quantity and the second submaxim of the maxim of quality, respectively (cf. the last sentence of the first paragraph below):

> *What we've just been talking about* are called the four maxims of Grice's COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE. (H.P. Grice is the philo-

sopher who developed these maxims). *I'll state them baldly, but you can interpret them more subtly.*
Relation: Be relevant.
Quantity: Be as informative as required and not more informative than required.
Quality: *Be truthful. Don't lie* and don't say what you don't know to be true.
Manner: *Be perspicacious.* Avoid obscurity, ambiguity, *disorderliness, rambling.* (Napoli 1996:455; italics added)

The author complies with the maxim of manner at the very beginning of the excerpt above, by signaling her discursive moves, but she violates the same maxim when she reverses the order in which the maxims are spelt out. She also violates the maxims of quality and manner when she presents these very maxims by drastically changing the initial formulation (and even the very wording; cf. 'perspicacious'); thereby she alters the illocutionary force originally conveyed by Grice. The text reveals a rather biased interpretation of Grice's words, which results in a change of both scope and focus.

Unlike Grice, Napoli does not resort to interpersonal metadiscursive devices to hedge potentially controversial renderings of the maxims. Moreover, she is violating the maxim of quantity by adding two synonymous submaxims to the maxim of quality, 'Be truthful. Don't lie'. All the maxims are violated when she uses person markers, such as 'I'll state them baldly, but you can interpret them more subtly', which are intended to justify her inaccurate and distorted representation of the conversational maxims. Furthermore, she expresses a totally unrealistic expectation that the readers will be somehow able to retrieve the correctly formulated maxims (despite her inaccurate paraphrasing and misleading information) and to 'interpret them more subtly'.

7.2. Interpretive academic textbooks

Unlike what I called reportive academic textbooks, interpretive academic textbooks appear to be more evaluative, challenging, and exploratory, displaying a stronger tendency to call into question established theories and certain accepted views. This is partly due to the fact that one of their primary purposes is to critically reconsider

existing knowledge and to advance new theoretical perspectives. At the same time, several of these books have an equally important purpose, namely to impart information and to facilitate the understanding and acquisition of specialized knowledge by an academic readership (some of whom are novices). In the interpretive academic textbooks that I have examined in more detail, Grice's Cooperative Principle is not simply accounted for, but it is also problematized, integrated in either a wider or a more specific perspective, and sometimes challenged in order to put forward a new theoretical approach. One important reason may be that the targeted readership is expected to be already acquainted with Grice's principle and maxims.

One such interpretive academic textbook is Herbert H. Clark's *Using Language* (1996), which presupposes some basic knowledge of linguistics. It is a plea for the view that language is used for doing things; naturally, Grice's Cooperative Principle has an important role to play here. The listing of the conversational maxims complies with these very maxims. Moreover, Clark follows generally the maxims of quantity and manner when he reports Grice's intentions, by using the third person singular; similarly, in the use of the maxim of quality, he makes use of hedging markers ('we might have expected') to advance his own standpoint, as in the excerpt below:

> Since Grice argued that every utterance 'contributes' to the 'accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange', *we might have expected* him to develop the notions 'contribution' and 'accepted purpose' and show how implicatures follow, but he didn't. Instead, *he offered* four *rules of thumb*, four maxims, that *he argued* enable listeners to work out implicatures. Paradoxically, *he expressed* the maxims as exhortations to speakers. (1996:141-142; italics added)

Here, the author associates the four maxims with 'rules of thumb': he does this deliberately in order to highlight specific aspects of the maxims, and is thus not violating, but complying with, the maxim of relation. In the textbooks by Hofmann and by Dörnyei and Thurrell, the substitution of the term 'rule' for 'maxim' was obviously unintentional; neither was it motivated. The strategy used by Clark can be regarded as a sort of stipulative definition, which is meant to specify one or some of the uses of a specialized term, and thus he complies with the maxim of manner. He also uses an attitude marker to convey his own interpretation of the illocutio-

nary force of Grice's maxims: 'he [Grice] expressed the maxims as exhortations to speakers'.

The second interpretive textbook that has been examined is Jenny Thomas's *Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics* (1997), which examines the development of pragmatics as a subject and introduces the reader to its aims, methodology, and current issues. The book is explicitly intended both as an introduction to pragmatics and as a textbook. Grice's Cooperative Principle is accounted for in detail and illustrated with many excellent, contextualized examples. Her caveats, like the ones below, are generally formulated in keeping with Grice's own maxims:

> The fact that Grice expressed the CP in the imperative mood *has led some casual readers of his work to believe* that Grice *was telling speakers how they ought to behave.* What he was *actually* doing *was suggesting* that in conversational interaction people work on the assumption that a certain set of rules is in operation, unless they receive indications to the contrary. [...] For, in setting out his Cooperative Principle, *Grice was not* (as some commentators have erroneously assumed) *suggesting that people are always good and kind or cooperative* in any everyday sense of that word. *He was simply noting* that, *on the whole,* people observe *certain* regularities in interaction and his aim was to explain one particular set of regularities – those governing the generation and interpretation of conversational implicature. (1997:62-63; italics added)

In clarifying two of Grice's formulations, Thomas can be seen to tone down the latter's speech acts. She achieves this by resorting both to hedging devices ('has led to believe', 'on the whole', 'certain regularities') and to emphatics ('actually', 'was not suggesting'). In the former case, she argues for an understanding of Grice's use of the imperative mood in terms of the weaker speech act of 'suggesting', rather than the stronger one of 'telling'. In the latter case, Thomas is signaling what she considers a misinterpretation by those commentators who assumed that Grice was 'suggesting', when he was 'simply noting' that people observe certain regularities. The hedging of these speech acts is paralleled by the use of the hedging adverbial 'on the whole'. Apart from complying with the maxims of quality and manner, Thomas also observes the maxim of relation, by substantiating her interpretations with evidence from Grice's own metadiscourse.

The preceding example also illustrates an important aspect of metadiscursive devices, namely the relativity of their functional interpretation. In other words, the elements included in the category of hedges are not pre-established once and for all. As seen in the excerpt above, the verb conveying the speech act of 'suggesting' is perceived and treated by Thomas as a hedging device in relation to the speech act of 'telling', but the same verb is perceived and treated as an emphatic speech act in relation to the speech act of '(simply) noting'.

Thomas uses metadiscursive devices to outline and comment on a number of problems associated with Grice's text, indirectly pointing out the latter's own violations of the maxims, as in the excerpt below:

> Having made all these distinctions, *it is extremely irritating to note that Grice himself does not always use the terms consistently* and remarkably few commentators seem to make any attempt to use the terms correctly. (1997:72; italics added)

> *Grice can claim credit* for asking a lot of *very exciting questions,* which have led linguists to think about language in a completely new way. But in the end, what we are left with is a set of very informal procedures for calculating conversational implicature, which cannot really withstand close scrutiny and, *as we have seen, the theory is full of holes,* some of which have yet to be plugged. (1997:93; italics added)

Unlike the authors of reportive textbooks, Thomas uses attitude markers and person markers, thus complying with the maxims of quality, relation, and manner, by means of which she evaluates the consequences that derive from Grice's theory and for which she provides evidence and clarifications.

The third interpretive textbook is Jef Verschueren's *Understanding Pragmatics* (1999), which is also explicitly intended both as an introduction to pragmatics and as a textbook. Grice's Cooperative Principle is described fairly accurately, even if not very extensively. Consider the following statements:

> *No doubt the major contribution* to our understanding of this type of process, however, has been Grice's theory of conversational implicature. Grice *proposed* a system of 'conversational logic' based on a number of 'maxims of conversation', i.e. intuitive principles

> which are supposed to guide conversational interaction in keeping with a general 'co-operative principle' (often referred to in the literature as CP). '*Maxims' differ from 'rules' in that they are seen as generally valid rather than to count only for specified (and specific) cases. [...] Assuming* that these maxims are *generally or 'normally'* adhered to in the communicative culture in which they were formulated, they give rise to 'conventional' or 'standard' conversational implicatures (not to be confused with what was called 'conventional implicatures' in the foregoing pages). (Verschueren 1998:32; italics added)

Verschueren's overview of Grice's Cooperative Principle complies with the maxim of relation in that the author makes the essential distinction between 'maxim' and 'rule'; it also complies with the maxim of manner by explaining the essence of Grice's theory in a concise and accessible way. The author's description of the theory is introduced by emphatic metadiscursive devices, for which he subsequently provides evidence. In particular, he observes the maxim of quality when he uses hedges, as in the last paragraph on page 32: 'Assuming that these maxims are generally or "normally" adhered to in the communicative culture in which they were formulated [...]'.

The fourth interpretive textbook that was examined is Sophia Marmaridou's *Pragmatic Meaning and Cognition* (2000), which is intended both as a textbook in pragmatics and semantics, and as a specialized book for readers interested in cognitive models. What distinguishes the treatment of Grice's theory in this textbook is the author's commitment to a reevaluation of established theories, as well as the systematic citation of academic sources. Let us consider the following excerpt:

> Furthermore, *this principle* [the Cooperative Principle] *appears as a regulative rule* which leads participants' inferencing mechanisms and guides their conversational moves, *as Borutti (1984:439) observes*. As Grice himself implies in naming his maxims of conversation, *the cooperative principle is a kind of Kantian constitutive condition* of the possibility of speaking, *that is, a constitutive rule* of human communicative interaction. (2000:32; italics added)

This author's association of the Cooperative Principle with 'a regulative rule' is clearly purposeful, but duly hedged ('appears as') and also supported with reference to a similar interpretation by another scholar. Further on, a similar hedging device ('is a kind of') is used by Marmaridou to tone down her comparison between the Cooperative Principle and the Kantian constitutive condition, thus complying, as before, with Grice's maxims of quality, relation, and manner. At the same time, she also makes use of attitude markers and person markers, as illustrated below:

> *Before challenging this view* in the last section of this chapter, *I shall first concentrate on the development of Grice's ideas* in the two frameworks just mentioned and on some related problems. (2000: 241; italics added)

By metadiscursively commenting on her own illocutionary acts, Marmaridou, like the other authors of interpretive textbooks, draws a line between the introductory presentation or review of the theory and her own (re)consideration of the same theory. The role of person markers, such as 'I shall first concentrate on', is to signal the author's discursive moves (complying with the maxims of relation and manner), whereas attitude markers, such as 'before challenging this view', are used to indicate the author's degree of commitment and the evaluative force of her claims. A related strategy is used in the excerpts below:

> Grice (1975:46) *considers the maxim of Relation very important* in generating implicatures, but at the same time *leaves it relatively unspecified.* (2000:230; italics added)

> The underspecification of the Relation maxim on the one hand, and its general applicability to derive implicatures, on the other, *seem to* have motivated Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory as a theory of cognition and communication. (2000:286; italics added)

After rendering Grice's own view on the maxim of relation, Marmaridou offers her metadiscursively hedged interpretation (cf. 'relatively'); later on, she advances, in a hedged way, her own

hypothesis. She is thus once more complying with the maxims of quality and manner.

8. Concluding remarks

This paper has addressed the issue of the interpersonal metadiscursive strategies employed by academic writers in accordance with the academic subgenre to which their texts belong. Interpersonal metadiscursive strategies are used to indicate not only the writer's perspective on his/her text and the relations s/he wishes to establish with the reader, but also the relationship between the writer and previous writers, on the one hand, and between the writer and the academic community, on the other.

The analysis has focused on two distinctive subcategories of academic textbooks, referred to as reportive vs. interpretive. The reference point is Grice's own account of the Cooperative Principle in his article 'Logic and conversation', where he makes full use of hedges, emphatics, and attitude and person markers. The distinction between principles and rules, so central to understanding the difference between discourse analysis and grammar, is also pivotal in comparing reportive to interpretive textbooks. Unlike the interpretive textbooks, the reportive textbooks that present Grice's theory abandon the tentativeness of the original, and moreover simplify, distort, and misrepresent the original maxims, principles, and rules; ironically enough, they thus violate many of the very maxims they purport to be presenting.

The present study has tried to expose the pragmatic limitations of certain reportive textbooks and the constant need not only to read and evaluate textbooks critically, but also to turn to other academic works as useful models for argumentative academic writing. Some reportive textbooks typically do not show sufficient understanding of the pragmatic requirements of a mixed academic audience, made up of both junior and senior academics. Moreover, they do not take into consideration the fact that arguments should be metadiscursively constructed so as to anticipate and/or refute objections. An increased awareness of the metadiscursive constraints underlying academic writing practice will hopefully make it easier for authors of reportive academic textbooks to meet the practical requirements of both reportive and interpretive academic writing.

Last, but not least, it is advisable to regularly assess and reassess the claims made in textbooks and in reference books. Special attention should be paid to the questionable practice of some textbook authors to rely almost exclusively on secondary sources, i.e. statements and claims made in earlier issues of the same textbook or in other textbooks, rather than on more thorough, independent studies or scholarly reevaluations of original academic texts.

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