

# Country Report Greece:

## Genres and Genre Practices in Higher Education

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### 1 Introduction

As the title suggests, this study reports on the linguistic situation in Higher Education (HE) in Greece, and, in particular, it surveys the most prominent genres and writing practices used across the board in HE, i.e., in all its domains of learning, teaching and assessment. The ultimate aim of this report is to provide a broad description of the country's national writing culture as fostered and practised in HE within the wider European culture and frame of reference.

The titles of the sections are indicative of a number of related questions raised within the more specific domain; these implicit questions, common to all reports, have been designed to act as a benchmark frame that will allow us to compare genres and genre practices in different systems of HE in various European countries. The ultimate aim is that this project will provide the necessary background for future interventions and processes that will engage with adjusting relevant practices in HE and creating a more or less uniform and standardized system of writing practices within the European frame, which will, nevertheless, also allow for some independence and diversity, as may be deemed necessary.

The report draws heavily on our vast experience in the education profession, acquired at various universities both in the country and abroad, but also on our teaching experience at primary and secondary level, too. One of the authors is also engaged in English language curriculum design for primary education while another teaches at the Open University, as well. Three of us have teaching experience at university level from USA, but also from private universities in Greece. Two of us have teaching experience from vocational institutions and primary and secondary education in Greece. We also draw on talks we had with both students and instructors from various departments of our university but also from other universities across the country. Additionally, we have resourced academic sites in the country.

First and foremost, it is imperative to give a synopsis of the HE system in Greece in order to provide the context of this report, and this is the aim of the next section. In section 3, we present prevalent perceptions of genres as entertained by the authors and other qualified language teachers (sampling views), as well as their impact on

teaching, while in section 4 we present further aspects of HE and language politics in Greece. In section 5, we focus on writing policies and cultures within HE in Greece and present the major genres used in this context, whereas in section 6 we engage in how genre-writing is fostered and practised in HE. In section 7, we briefly review the Bologna Process and the possible impact it has had on writing practices, in general, and in Greece, in particular. We conclude, in section 8, with a synopsis of the major problems with regards to our topic in Greece's HE system.

## **2 Structural aspects of Higher Education**

By HE we mean any institutions or organisations that provide degrees at the tertiary level (ISCED 5 and 6) and are recognised by the state or other governmental or public agencies or the general public (Schwarz and Westerheijden, 2004). This definition would include both public universities, funded, recognised and accredited centrally and officially by the Ministry of Education, but also private universities in Greece, as yet not accredited officially, some of which are collaborating with, and operating within a frame of, usually, a UK based fully accredited university. We will return to this issue further down.

In Greece, there are two types of HE institutions: those of the public sector and those of the private sector. The former includes universities (24 in all), technological institutes and vocational schools. There is also an exclusively Technical University in Athens, called The National Technical University (NTUA), which is the oldest and most prestigious educational institution of Greece in the field of technology (no commonalities with former UK polys), with various schools of engineering, architecture, city planning, applied mathematics and physical science, etc. and robust postgraduate programmes. Another type of university is the Hellenic Open University, which is partially state-funded and the only distance learning institution in Greece. All of them admit students from 18 years onwards. Universities are research- and teaching-focused institutions, whereas technological and vocational schools have a vocational rather than an academic orientation. Technological institutes, which can be considered equivalent to former polytechnics in the UK, have been accorded university status rather recently (just like in the UK). While in our collective consciousness they are of a lower prestige (even though entrance exams are required), especially as their intake of students have failed entrance to traditional universities, they can boast a practical –and hence vocational- approach in their study programmes with their graduates enjoying good employment rates. However, as Greece is right now (2011-2014) in deep financial recession, unemployment rates are rocket high in all fields.

HE within the private sector includes private institutions, which are either branches of foreign universities (mostly English) or private institutions affiliated to accredited foreign (UK or USA) universities, and they are all research- and teaching-focused. To date these institutions are not yet accredited in Greece due to present legislation, but there is pressure for granting accreditation status. While entrance to state universities is exam-based and very competitive, private universities do not as yet share the high reputation of state universities, and getting a place in them is secured primarily on a financial basis. Nevertheless, there has been a proliferation of these private 'universities' in recent years and especially before the onset of the financial crisis, despite their unrecognized status by the state or any accreditation agencies. It is fair to note that there has been a clear tendency on the part of successive governments

towards granting full accreditation to some of those private institutions, which, however, invoking clauses of the country's constitution regarding the right to free education, is forcefully resisted by public universities' faculty members and their unions. The controversy also revolves around the quality of academic studies offered by these institutions, which might not be independently assured, especially as there's diminished public trust in the independence of recognised agencies and institutions that they would reliably assess them and provide quality assurances. This controversy must also be seen in the light of the method of gaining a place in the tertiary education system in the country. Entrance in the public HE system of Greece is very competitive, as has been noted. All students wishing to take up studies in the more prestigious public sector of HE, which is their overwhelming majority, need to take the same exams for each bundle of disciplines across the board, that is, across all universities; these exams are centrally administered by the Ministry of Education, and students will gain a place in their preferred university and field of studies on the basis of their cumulative grade. Prior studies in secondary education and their marks are not taken into account, nor do specific universities or faculties have any say about their intake. Studies in public universities usually span four years, with the exception of the Medical Faculty and the Faculty of Engineering, are free of charge, and students are also entitled to their board, free books and a place in student halls, though the latter may depend on parents' declared income.

On the other hand, entrance into HE private institutions is mostly determined by the students' ability to afford the fees, but academic potential, or any officially recognised assessment method, does not seem to play any crucial part; hence, the wider perception is that those institutions act as fallback options. On the other hand, there is a clear policy on the government's part to also accommodate those students who cannot make it into the public sector of HE, and, further, to provide them with an attractive option that ultimately will stop them from pursuing studies abroad, mostly in the UK. Studying at home in private universities that will grant them fully accredited degrees recognised also in the public sector of the employment market once they graduate is an alluring prospect.

A final type of public institutions is the International Hellenic University (<http://www.ihu.edu.gr/>), which was set up in Thessaloniki, in the North of Greece, in 2005, and targets postgraduate students from South East Europe, but also across the world. It consists of the School of Economics, Business Administration and Legal Studies, the School of Humanities and the School of Science and Technology, all offering various Masters degree programmes.

The Greek HE system has been rather centralized, with all decisions on study programmes (curriculum design, but even curriculum changes, etc.), faculty appointments and promotions, etc. taken locally by the departments, but officially having to be approved by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, even if this ratification was perfunctory rather than real. But this situation has changed together with the whole structure of HE as a result of a new law that came into effect quite recently (2014 witnessed the implementation of a slightly revised version of the new education law and universities are still in a transitional stage regarding a number of internal affairs). Universities are now in the process of becoming de-centralized having their own governing board (board of trustees), but right now we have to wait and see how this new law will get implemented and play out for all parties concerned.

Up till now institutions have been funded exclusively by the state and were required to admit a particular number of students each year determined by the Ministry of Education (despite departmental algorithms requested but ignored each

time by the Ministry). Recently, clamp restrictions by the Ministry of Education have been gradually relaxed in an attempt to accord greater autonomy to all universities as the new education Bill (which is now a law) had been in consultation.

In the next section, we present perceptions of genre shared by the authors but we also sample impromptu views on the notion adopted by four language instructors, with training in ELT, ESP and LT, teaching College English at the Department of English of Aristotle University. As will become clear from further sections of this report, specially trained instructors to teach academic writing or other types of genre and relevant modules are only to be found in Language and Literature Departments, and primarily in Foreign Language and Literature Departments, but also in language centres.

### 3 Perceptions of 'genre'

#### 3.1 *Genre perceptions in language teaching*

Genres as different text types (oral or written) can be identified and defined from various perspectives depending on the purposes of one's engagement with the subject. What follows are perceptions of genre determined by either the researcher's interest in the subject, or the teacher's and practitioner's more pragmatic approach and purposes within the teaching engagement. According to Swales (1990: 58), "a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes ...constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style." Although Swales (2004: 61) considers the above definition of genre as "long and bold", some of us engaged in academic teaching adopt it because it highlights quite effectively the intertwining of communicative purposes with schematic structure, content and style. Consideration of audience and purpose affect content and form of a given text whether oral or written. Swales' approach to genre mostly informs Anna-Maria's teaching since she is mainly engaged in teaching academic writing as determined by the Language Centre's agenda.

Cleopatra's view of genre is closely related. She defines genre as a set of contextually-defined texts with their own rhetorical characteristics addressed to a narrowly-defined audience. Genre embodies the successful relationship between discourse and culture. It is a construct defined by both its content and form, but, because it is dynamic, its features cannot be narrowly-defined. Genres then are a compilation of loose formal conventions. It is also recognized that some texts can be hybrid texts belonging to more than one genre simultaneously. More succinctly, Marina defines genre as referring to types of discourse which may vary according to subject and the purpose of text in the particular context.

At this point, we can report the views of four language teachers working for the School of English, Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, Aristotle University, where English Language Mastery I and II are required courses offered in the first two semesters of the study programme. These teachers are not all specifically trained in discourse analysis and genre theory, but are all aware of the significance of the generic type in their English language teaching. Most of them will also organize their teaching modules around genres. We report their views as representative of qualified teachers in the field, bearing in mind that they do not necessarily (or

generally) reflect the views of instructors in other fields of learning and other departments.

*English Language Instructor<sub>1</sub>* (MA in Education, UK; Ph.D. in ELT, Aristotle University; native speaker of English): “‘Genre’ is, of course, a French word which has been borrowed by English speakers. To me it means ‘of that type’. But it is used as an umbrella term, so that we can distinguish between oral ‘genres’ and written ‘genres’ and between different media for communication of ideas such as the novel or film. By this I mean that within the broad umbrella of written and oral genres, there are other sub-groups, each of which we can refer to as genres, which for me means a ‘tool for communication of a particular type’. These different genres are distinguished by the conventions they use, the register they use and the style that they use. Now there are also new genres both for communication and teaching – such as blogs, twitters, moodle etc.”

*English Language Instructor<sub>2</sub>* (critical discourse analyst; Ph.D. in discourse analysis, University of Lancaster): “A genre is a way of doing things (e.g. Fairclough, 1992). It ‘occurs in a particular setting, that has distinctive and recognizable patterns and norms of organization and structure and that has particular and distinctive communicative functions.’ (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 224). To that, I would also add the established participants, the content, the level of formality and whether it is spoken or written. Of course, not all instances that fall within the same genre will have the exact same structure or purpose. In fact, there can be more than one communicative purpose in the same genre. On top, a genre can be embedded within another one, and hybrid genres do exist.”

*English Language Instructor<sub>3</sub>* (UK trained; Ph.D. in ESP, Aristotle University; native speaker of English): “At times, influenced by older views of genre, it is what I now see as ‘organizing principles’ of a text. In such a view, describing, narrating, building an argument and so on can fall under the term ‘genre’. The influence of ESP brings out the idea that genre is the text associated with a topic. So there is the genre of medical, of business, of academia, etc. Later views, that follow a more Hallidayan line, take genre to be the whole of the way a piece of text is presented in order for its purpose and important content to be clear so that the text achieves the aims the writer has in mind.”

*English Language Instructor<sub>4</sub>* (Ph.D in ELT, Aristotle University): “Genre is the style adopted when a person expresses oneself in writing. However, this does not exclude other modes of expression in art, music, painting, or even dance/choreography.”

### 3.2 *Theoretical perceptions of genre*

A more theoretical interest in genre theory (also reflecting Eliza’s perceptions of genre) may stem from the belief that knowledge of the generic type is instrumental in meaning-generating and meaning-making, both at the production end and at the reception end, and, indeed, from its pivotal role in language (utterance) interpretation. So this interest is rather more theoretical than that of the language instructor’s. But it is only fair to appreciate that all methods and approaches in the applied (social)

sciences are firmly grounded in theoretical perceptions of issues, which are later made more practicable within specific applied fields of knowledge.

Knowledge of genre encapsulates quite a lot for the producer of the text, be it oral or written: What is the social situation, who is it addressed to, what is its purpose of production, what are the circumstances (the author's relation to the addressee), how does author/speaker draw on previous texts within similar circumstances (intertextuality), etc? Similar questions are raised at the reception end of utterance or text interpretation in the field of pragmatics. It is true that more weight has been placed on interpretation, rather than production over the years for obvious reasons. However, both production line and reception end are equally important, especially as readers/hearers of texts need to assess mental states and, more particularly, intentional states of their producers (pivotal for accessing the subtext, too). In this context, it is no surprise that the notion of 'communicative purpose' has gained a privileged position in determining genre. On the other hand, we need to be aware of the distinction between communicative intention (tied up to the purpose of the text) and informative intention (cf. Sperber and Wilson, 2004).

But what is genre? Firstly, we may decide that we make no distinction between discourse type and genre (documented in the literature). Secondly, we may also decide that we make no distinction either, between text and discourse, and consequently between text type and discourse type. But to obliterate a distinction between the two (not always practicable in our view), we need to think of texts as always embedded in their social contexts. This embedding will in effect turn a text into discourse. With this proviso, we can view 'genre', 'discourse type' and 'text type' as equivalent terms. Genre has been defined, mostly in literature, in terms of the literary type (fiction, poem, etc.), but also in terms of its subject matter, journalese, advertising discourse, etc. It has also been described as distinct types according to purpose, such as descriptive, expository, argumentative, instructive, narrative. This classification of genre mostly relies on feature-analysis; for instance, it has been shown that narrative genre entails the steady use of the perfective that narrates the main events, while the imperfective is used to background information that is ancillary to the main thread of the narration of events (description of circumstances in subordinate clauses, etc.). On the other hand, the argumentative discourse type abounds in the use of imperfective predicates that are mostly used for backgrounding information in narratives, but also for eternal truths and law-like statements, and views (often taking the form of 'truths') presented in argumentation. All these classifications assume a clear distinction between homogeneously defined types; this is not true, however, as has been widely established in the literature. Discourse-types may intermingle to a great extent, and produce hybrid ones or mixed genres, such as UK university prospectuses, which border on advertising discourse (Fairclough, 1993; Bhatia, 1997, 2000), or narratives intermingled with evaluations and argumentation (Labov, 1972), but it is right on the whole to assume generic types that act as 'guidelines' both at the production and reception end.

A more particular take on genre (or discourse type, as we would call the generic type) focuses on its social and 'hermeneutical' function (the latter term attributed to Eliza's approach by critics, e.g., Unger 2006), as analysed in Kitis (1999). Kitis's approach originates from an appreciation and adaptation of Gricean pragmatics and the need to incorporate it into situative discursive events or types of written/oral language interpretation. The functional utility of this notion of genre will cater to coded text but also extend to implicit and inferred meanings generated in discourse. We could define generic types as falling directly into generic or archetypes of social

events or ‘activity types’ (Levinson, 1978). We have proposed the principle of Global Relevance and claimed it to reign supreme in each particular social event type enjoining distinct discourse types appropriately falling within social situation types, defining goals and other parameters (Kitis, 1999). All other Gricean maxims follow suit the application of the maxim of Global Relevance and have a complementary, but not primary role. So Global Relevance is a relevance of a social nature underlying coherence relations and explaining how a text hangs together and fits into its social context. This generic knowledge is manifested, and re-constructed each time it is applied, both in production and reception lines.

In more practical terms, that is in terms of teaching, we propose that, for each type of discourse, we need to isolate three levels of analysis: first, the level of the content or what can be called the propositional level, or ideational level (Hallidayan approach) at which information is conveyed (What is it about?). Another most important level is what has been called the metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005). This level focuses mostly on the rhetorical features that are employed each time. But rhetoricity needs to be seen at two levels, too. One may correspond to what Halliday called the interpersonal level at which speakers/authors and hearers/readers assume roles and construct identities in their communicative act. This is the level at which roles are enacted and speech acts are performed. The textual level is the third level at which various strategies and rhetorical features materialize in the language (see Hatzitheodorou, 2008). These various levels are not insular in the linguistic means used, but rather criss-cross in interesting and complicated ways. But first and foremost, they need to be seen as integrated actional structures dominated or determined by the archetype of the social situation enacted each time (Kitis, 1999). Variations, reinforcements, enrichments and any alterations will be meaningful only in light of the archetypal situation, which is stored in our memory as structured knowledge in the form of frames, schemas or scripts (Minsky, 1971; Widdowson, 1983; Schank and Abelson, 1977). Language teachers must have a working knowledge of how to identify levels, features and rhetorical structures so that they can see the commonalities and diversities of generic types, and be able to teach them in a methodology that will profitably capitalize on this knowledge in an implicit way and for the benefit of the student.

### *3.3 Impact of genre perceptions on teaching practices in HE*

The authors of this report as language instructors are very much influenced by an analysis of genre geared to the teaching of academic writing or of English for Specific/Academic Purposes. Swales’s theories are an obvious and major inspiration in this respect, but viewing genres as manifestations of “discourse communities” (Bizzell, 1992; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995) also contributes to more efficient teaching. On the other hand, we may choose not to ascribe to any particular school of genre in our teaching. Whether having read Kress (1988), Fowler (1989), Swales (1990), or Abercrombie (1996), we have probably come away with no one definition of genre as there is none. Our reading has imprinted upon us that scholars have attempted a systemization of genres that seem to comply up to a point before they break loose again and defy any formulization. Even when texts are grouped together, they tend to break free and be themselves. It is similarities as much as differences within a genre that make a genre what it is. So it would be fair to note that we don’t draw explicitly our understanding of genre from any particular ‘school’ or theory of

genre, even though in our teaching experience Swales' theory has been the major influence.

While genre theory and genre appreciation underlies and informs our language teaching, it is not taught explicitly as a theory except, perhaps, at Departments of Languages and Literatures. For example, at the Department of English Language and Literature of the university of Thessaloniki, genres are taught in the module of Discourse Analysis, a course taught (by Eliza) to prospective language teachers of English, while at the equivalent Department in Athens two relevant courses within the curriculum are 'Academic Discourse' and 'Genres in English', both following a genre-based approach (Ifantidou, 2011). Such courses are geared to advancing students' meta-pragmatic or meta-discursive awareness and, consequently, their skills in the field. Similar courses can be offered at times in other similar modules in the humanities across departments and universities. But even in this module, we use a hands-on approach and try to rationalize students' instinctual responses to text types and discourse types (our personal experience and Ifantidou, 2011). In fact, we try to teach students the various levels of language analysis, since these students in their vast majority will be called to teach English in their professional lives. They are taught how to recognize distinctive features of generic types, appreciate their significance in creating the genre or specific discourse type, isolate those features that are more specific to particular genres, and on this basis attempt to categorize texts. For our purposes, we use a features-based account, but we also try to make students aware of their own implicit knowledge in the field, intertextual issues, etc.

At the Centre for Teaching Foreign Languages of Aristotle University, a unit whose mission is to foster mainly academic English for students across all Departments, and also teach other advanced courses in foreign languages, lecturers prepare their own materials according to students' needs. In English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, for instance, Hatzitheodorou's (2008) proposal for a rather radical, but functional, framework incorporating both relevance theory (Wilson and Sperber, 2004) and Hallidayan levels in teaching academic writing, is put to use with noticeable results. In general, in language classes or in discourse analysis modules there is an effort to apply a pragmatic notion of genre trying to sensitize our students to various text types that are part of their "disciplinary cultures" (Hyland 2004). The general perception seems to be that the texts 'speak for themselves' and it is through them, working backwards, that lecturers might point out some systemization of features to students, but without insisting that they 'learn' them in any objective or theoretical sense. In one word, where such courses are included within the curriculum, lecturers try to equip students with the performance skills in the field, both as producers and interpreters.

## **4 HE and language policies**

### *4.1 Official languages in Higher Education*

As noted, HE institutions in Greece are either public or private. The former enjoy higher prestige and are sought after by students. As Greek is the official language of the Greek state, this is also the language of instruction at all public HE institutions, except for the International Hellenic University, whose official language is English. Since its constitution as a national state, Greece has been a country with an overwhelmingly homogeneous population, and Modern Greek is homogeneously spoken throughout the country except for some minor pockets of the population



whose mother tongue can be other than Greek. Kitis (1993, also available on line in Kitis' homepage) surveys the linguistic landscape of Greece with a focus on multilingualism and education. However, the linguistic situation has somewhat changed since 1993, due to the influx of immigrants over the last two decades, and more recently through Turkey from countries with severe problems, with consequent changes in the educational system (boost classes in the Greek language, remedial Greek, etc.); the educational system tried to adapt to this new situation and accommodate the immigrant population's special linguistic needs in primary and secondary education. Moreover, even though the constitution of the Greek state dates back to the 19th century, northern parts of Greece (Macedonia, Thrace, Epirus) were not liberated from Ottoman dominion and annexed to the Greek state until early in the 20th century when a population exchange took place resulting in ethnic and linguistic homogeneity.

Languages other than Greek may be used for teaching and assessment in foreign language departments of the University of Athens and the University of Thessaloniki. These are specifically dedicated to the study of those languages, their literature and culture, at an undergraduate and postgraduate level: English, French, German, Italian Spanish and Turkish. The extent of their use, however, may vary widely by department and university. English is the sole language used for both teaching and assessment purposes at the International Hellenic University (IHU). Indeed, IHU is Greece's first public university where programmes are exclusively taught in English. English may be the language of instruction in particular departments and/or courses where the knowledge of English is considered to be a necessary qualification, e.g., Department of Journalism and Mass Communication. Additionally, some of the university departments provide courses in English especially for Erasmus exchange students (e.g., School of Law, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; Department of European and International Studies, the University of Macedonia). When such courses are not operated, teaching faculty may give tuition on a one-to-one basis in English or other languages. Finally, at the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching at Aristotle University, as well as at the equivalent centre at the university of Athens, where languages for specific purposes are taught to students of various university departments, foreign languages are used for both instruction and assessment.

With respect to private HE institutions, these are very often affiliated with British or American universities and are required to offer an English language or a bilingual programme of studies. The latter includes courses which may be taught either in Greek or in English.

#### 4.2 *Other languages-The status of English in HE*

In state institutions Greek is the only language used for teaching and writing (with the exceptions stated above). Thus, when taking exams or writing assignments, students employ exclusively the Greek language. English is used only when postgraduate – usually – students wish to submit and publish papers in foreign language journals abroad. In the English Departments at the University of Athens and the University of Thessaloniki, English is the only medium employed for teaching, assessment, assignments, research papers, projects and theses. With respect to the other foreign language departments, the use of the respective foreign language may vary depending on the department and university. Finally, with regards to the Centres for Foreign Language Teaching where languages for specific purposes are taught, teaching,

exams, assignments and projects are all carried out in one of the foreign languages catered for by the particular institution.

However, the overwhelming majority of HE students in Greece have good English, acquired either privately at institutes or in state education, as English is the most popular foreign language taught extracurricularly, but also available within the curriculum in state education throughout all levels, including HE, where in most departments students are offered classes of advanced English (mostly EAP), organized by the highly qualified faculty of the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching. Moreover, most departments require applicants for MA and MSc programmes to take exams in English proficiency. This exam or certificates of English proficiency is a prerequisite for students' admittance to postgraduate programmes. Some departments participate in Erasmus Mundus programmes. In such cases, foreign students receive tuition in the language agreed (often English), which on occasion maybe on a one-to-one basis; they are also examined in English; but there are Mundus MA programmes conducted in French, too. Erasmus undergraduate students have their exams mostly in English. English may be the sole official language of instruction and writing in the private institutions, which are, however, not recognized by the Greek State, as already stressed, even though most of them are accredited by foreign accreditation bodies.

## **5 Writing policies in Higher Education**

### *5.1 Writing cultures-Major genre types*

Differences between universities and technological institutes do not seem to have any obvious impact on the type of genres used in the two types of HE institutions. Even though HE institutions have been centralized up to this moment, they are independent in designing their programme of studies, selection of courses, teaching methodology and means of assessment. In particular, each institution is expected to devise its own assessment procedures, this autonomy being delegated to each individual instructor; assessment may include end-of-term exams, various types of continuous assessment, oral presentations and projects, research papers and diploma theses. Indeed, it is the instructor who will determine the type of assessment best fitting the course and its audiences. As expected, within this range of types of assessment there is variation on the exam genre. Thus, there may be exams based on the descriptive genre (e.g., replies to questions in literature and other disciplines), argumentative (critical), multiple choice, comprehension questions, oral exams and/or presentations, etc. The reality is that at the undergraduate level big class sizes compel instructors to adopt an end-of-term final exam rather than a continuous assessment method that would promote students' practising of writing.

The types of genres practised in private universities are assumed to be very similar to the ones of public universities, but there is no research to date to confirm this. Moreover, as the medium of assessment is English in most of them, it is only to be expected that there is a transference of students' writing skills from Greek, acquired in high school, to English writing, as is the case for public universities. This transference may cause further problems as the pragmatics of writing in various genres need not always be transferable to any other linguistic culture. However, additional emphasis may be put to teaching writing in some of these private universities depending on subject matter (mostly in humanities) and class size, especially as classes are small.

Instructors at those institutions are usually expected to follow the curriculum and assessment types set by the administration of the affiliated university.

### 5.1.1 *Assessment genres*

The assessment/evaluation routines may vary greatly by course and institution. It is the prerogative of any instructor/faculty member to determine the kind of assessment. However, we could generalize and say that end-of-term exam is the main written genre. Such examination texts are produced in timed situations where students' access to resources is generally very limited. Research papers and projects are other forms of assessment but these are not generally adopted as the size of student audiences in most universities and university courses is quite large. When this type of assessment is chosen (called 'ergasia', literally meaning 'work' but considered to be the equivalent of 'seminar paper'), supervision and evaluation of student writing are carried out by faculty members. Further, students may do some writing in class in the form of note taking or they may be required to do in-class short quizzes, called tests ('test'). There is no tutorial system at undergraduate level in HE, except in applied science and medicine, where students work in labs and clinics. Students are mostly prone to copious in-class note taking, while at some departments (mainly in humanities) there are specific courses of research methodology, but not all students can take these courses. Out of class academic writing practices may include short writing activities or short exercises and quizzes that may or may not be assessed. In some courses students are given the option of a long written assignment ('ergasia', seminar paper) in lieu of the final exam, but this type of assessment is realistic only with the prospect that not many students opt for this type of assessment. All the above types of assessment, both written assignments and in-class team work, are considered to form part of both learning and assessment.

At the Master's level, with student numbers permitting, assessment is drastically changed to continuous assessment, primarily based on written papers ('ergasia') and long projects, in-class presentations ('parousiasi' meaning 'presentation'), but also mini-research papers and in-class quizzes ('tests') mostly in combination with a long final assignment and/or final exams, or any combination of the above. Supervision of projects and research papers is conducted by faculty members and the evaluation of the final dissertation ('diplomatiki' diploma thesis) is carried out by a committee of faculty members. Ph.D. theses (doctorates), which cannot be completed before the lapse of a three-year period, are very closely supervised primarily by the main supervisor, but also by another two members on the supervising committee. The genres used in the theses vary according to the main genres used in the special field, and the supervisor is in a way the final arbiter of the acceptability of the submitted written thesis ('didaktoriki diatrivi', meaning 'doctoral treatise'), not just as content but also as written product. For the viva, Ph.D. candidates present their work, usually in power point presentations, and have to orally defend their thesis and results.

### 5.1.2 *Final thesis requirement*

The requirement for final thesis writing seems to vary by discipline. For example, Engineering Schools (including the Departments of Architecture, City Planning, Chemical Engineering) require a long diploma thesis/project, called 'diplomatiki' (in fact this is the adjective for 'ergasia' that has taken the form of a noun in the students' parlance, 'diplomatiki ergasia' meaning 'diploma thesis'); this diploma thesis is required for graduation during the final fifth year of studies, and the School has resisted vehemently the Bologna guideline for reducing their studies to three years

and the standardization attempt in this respect. A diploma thesis ('diplomatiki') is not a prerequisite for graduation in other university departments. In some departments in some institutions, undergraduate students may be given the option of writing a long research paper, which will be one of their final year modules, and may be assigned double the credits of other modules (diploma thesis 'diplomatiki', 12 ECTS). There may also be an option for a shorter thesis (6 ECTS) in lieu of a taught course. Both options presuppose the availability of a supervisor.

At MA/MSc level, students are commonly required to also write a major final thesis 'diplomatiki' (ca 30 ECTS), in addition to the assignments and/or shorter research papers ('ergasia') for each course. Students are often required to make in-class power point presentations and present some topics of the literature, or individual or team projects that they present in class or more publicly in seminars and workshops. This practice prepares them and gives them confidence for more public presentations in their later professional or academic domains. At Ph.D. level all students are required to write a dissertation, but at some departments they are also required to present their research progress in staff seminars regularly. All Ph.D. dissertations and MA/MSc diploma theses are filed in digital form and/or as hard copies in the libraries. Research findings of in-progress postgraduate studies are often aired in conferences, sometimes in collaboration with supervisors, and a fair number of them end up as published articles in various journals. Such publications are frequently in the English language, hence students' call for courses in EAP.

Both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, bibliography on certain topics and subjects is usually made available in the course's teaching platform or in the form of hard copies. Many instructors also upload a number of topics for assignments on their electronic platforms, though students may choose their own topic, which can be adopted after consultation with the supervisor. Digital bibliography, including whole articles and even books in pdf format, is gradually becoming the norm for those courses that enjoy a comprehensive digital teaching platform. Universities in Greece have adopted Moodle, or are converting to it from their original e-class or blackboard learning platforms. In all cases, students are encouraged to conduct their own independent bibliographical research.

### 5.1.3 *Disciplinary genres*

Disciplinary knowledge is acquired in the form of lectures given by faculty, subsequent reading in the field of study and finally through exams, and less often through written assignments such as research papers and continuous assessment; in fact, the latter are more conducive to learning than end-of-term exams, as students have ample time to think critically, reflect and, therefore, better acquire disciplinary knowledge. Continuous assessment may involve assigned homework, a report, a literature review, a short quiz on assigned readings, etc. Besides the above text types that are used for evaluation and assessment, students gain disciplinary knowledge through note-taking and annotated reading. Thus, students familiarize themselves with the specific terminology of their field of study, but there is no further work on how to apply various genres in their field (e.g., how to draft a paper, a project, conduct an oral interview, make an oral presentation, etc.). In applied sciences, disciplinary genres are practiced orally in labs or in clinics, where students are pressed to participate under supervision.

Students may be taught disciplinary terminology in the foreign language of their choice at the university's centre for foreign language teaching, even though this is

mostly realistic with English, as the majority of students have very good English and can take more advanced courses in their disciplinary field; but some may opt to take another language, such as Italian, where courses on offer are less advanced. Those students proficient in English may also take courses in EAP offered by the university's centre for foreign language teaching. But such courses are scant in other languages and non-existent at centres for Modern Greek language teaching.

### 5.2 *Operationalization of policies for the development of oral/written genres*

In the context of HE, as in many other educational contexts, it is important to ask the question of which agency, if any, is responsible for operationalizing language and writing policies and whose responsibility ultimately it is to cater to students' writing development in higher education institutions. As we know, in most US universities, there are language or writing centres, working alongside actual classes, in that they assist writing intensive classes, by welcoming upper-division students who need help with their academic writing and genre-writing, but also freshman, college English classes by instructing students on basic organizing principles of rhetoric (including teaching of structure, paragraph formation, punctuation, etc.). More recently, in the UK too, there have sprung up new centres at almost all universities for the development of academic skills catering to the linguistic needs of their prospective students in pre-sessional courses and of their current students in in-sessional ones. This is a very active industry of fostering academic skills in their students developed mainly in recent years as the UK HE system admits a high number of foreign students.

On the other hand, since in HE in Greece students are in their overwhelming majority native speakers of Greek, and as the linguistic medium in HE is the Greek language, there are no pre-sessional classes to prepare students for academic discourses and, in particular, academic writing and listening skills, as is the tradition in the UK, where there is a considerable intake of foreign students. In the Greek context, as has already been noted, students are expected to have mastered the skill of writing by the time they start attending University. Writing then is not a skill University Instructors dwell on very much even though instructors are quick to point out that their students' writing abilities have steadily deteriorated over time.

There is an implicitly shared assumption that native speakership, in conjunction with tuition in writing in secondary education (high school), is all that is required to foster proficient use of various genres at university level and later in the workplace. Some disciplines in the humanities such as the English Departments and other foreign language departments consciously offer freshman requirement courses on writing in English and in other respective languages, but there are no more writing classes in upper level classes. Moreover, the organization of writing classes is mostly motivated by the real need that writing has to be mastered in a non-native language. The problem is further compounded by the fact that students of public HE institutions in Greece are not overall obligated to attend classes making any conscious attempt to promote writing extremely difficult. This situation is the result of oversize classes and the absence of a seminar or tutorial system, as has already been pointed out. But it is fair to hasten and add that instructors in Foreign Language Departments, but also in the humanities in general, are acutely aware of the urgent need to foster good writing skills in their students in their native tongue, too, and work on the diversities and commonalities in the respective language cultures and genres. Some poetry

workshops or writing-thesis workshops attempt to address the problem and any interest upper-level students may have in writing, creative or otherwise.

There are language schools for the teaching of Greek attached to universities; however, those schools or centres are committed to teaching the Greek language to foreign students wishing to pursue studies at universities in Greece or to Erasmus students who wish to acquire Greek, but offering courses on academic skills in the Greek language targeting Greek students is not within their agenda. For example, to concentrate on the two oldest and biggest universities in the country, at Aristotle University, The School of Modern Greek Language (<http://smg.web.auth.gr/wordpress/?lang=en>) is a unit that offers Greek language and culture courses to foreigners in Thessaloniki, Erasmus students, but also to Greeks living abroad. Equally, the other old and big university of the country, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, operates a Modern Greek Language Teaching Centre (<http://en.greekcourses.uoa.gr/>), whose brief is as follows:

1. The teaching of Modern Greek as a second/foreign language;
2. The certification of the level of knowledge of Modern Greek as second/foreign language;
3. The exposure of foreigners to various facets and themes of Greek culture;
4. Hands-on practical training of students of the Master's Degree Programme for the Teaching of Modern Greek as a second/foreign language.

Quite clearly, neither of those centres or schools appear to have in their curriculum courses aiming to foster academic skills in Greek students.

The situation is not different in the International Hellenic University, where English is the medium of instruction and learning, and students are not necessarily native speakers. However, students are admitted to the IHU, amongst other requirements, also on the strength of a Proficiency certificate in English, as all teaching is carried out in English; so, a high level of language proficiency is guaranteed. Nevertheless, apart from their academic advisors that will assist students with matters of terminology and despite the expressed call for more specialized language teaching for academic purposes, there are as yet no such English courses, either-pre-sessional or in-sessional, offered by the university.

On the other hand, the centres for teaching foreign languages of the two biggest and oldest universities in the country, Aristotle University in Thessaloniki and Kapodistrian University in Athens, are units whose mission is to teach students foreign languages and other advanced courses, but also to foster mainly academic English for students across all Departments, as students opting for English already have high proficiency and have the expectation to acquire disciplinary academic skills in English.

All in all, public HE institutions do not operate writing centres as the perception that acquiring writing skills needs specific resources and organization has not as yet been institutionally adopted, despite the acute awareness of its significance amongst individual academics. Earmarking resources and funds for this purpose is also a deterrent for putting in place such centres. At present students do not do much writing, and even when they do (write a thesis, for example), they are mostly left to their own devices and guided mainly by their supervisors who are experts in the discipline of the thesis as well as experienced writers themselves. As in many other cases in the Greek context, the individual steps in to counterbalance what is lacking at an institutional level; it is fair to note that many faculty members (like ourselves) have

uploaded on their sites or electronic learning platforms specific guidelines for writing a thesis, information on copyright infringement, etc., which students can resource in their assigned writing. We can also add that in pedagogical departments, components on school and academic genres are often included within modules on literacies. But all this does not amount to any systematic programme aiming at fostering genre competence in the context of HE.

On the other hand, Centres for Foreign Language Teaching at universities, and more specifically branches for English language teaching, often undertake part of the task of teaching writing, but this is done mostly in English, as has been noted, and, less so, in other foreign languages taught at the Centres. As such Centres offer courses of advanced English to various departments, instructors may teach in English academic and other genres relating to their disciplines; but not all students are required to take such courses. This is possible primarily for English language courses, as students of various departments are rather proficient in English, as already noted, thus allowing English language instructors (who are well versed in teaching writing/oral genres) to teach various disciplinary genres rather than remedial English. In effect, it may be that such courses are very similar to some courses offered at the CAPLITS (Centre for Academic and Professional Literacies) of the Institute of Education, London, a centre specifically designed for teaching academic writing in educational settings (<http://caplitswritingcentre.ioe.ac.uk/>), where one of the authors (Kitis) spent over a week in 2010 familiarizing herself with their curriculum and policies, while she was vice-director of the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching at Aristotle University.

Private HE institutions offer freshman composition classes; they promote writing, and also attempt to safeguard against plagiarism, through various committees such as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), and Committee for Academic Integrity (CAI) respectively. Active support for writing is also offered in such institutions through Writing Centres, whose goal is to advise, help and create conscious writers.

### 5.3 *Challenges in moving from writing in secondary education to writing in HE*

Students are expected to know how to write as they move from secondary education to HE. High school students have always had to write compositions but it was only after 1987-88 that a new course titled *Composition* ('Ekthesi') made it into the school curriculum. For the first time ever students worked on the paragraph as a textual unit, and came across terms like "thesis statement," and "topic sentence." Also some mention was made of text types. Then in 2003 the term *Composition* gave its place to the term *Modern Greek Language*. The students were introduced to the study of paragraphs, essays and summaries by way of teaching them the major rhetorical modes of exposition along with some types of texts depending on the students' age. In junior high school (Gymnasium, 12-15), for example, students were taught how to write out an application, while in Lyceum (15-18) students were introduced to more sophisticated text types such as news items, news comments, biographies, memoirs, book reviews, etc.

In HE, end-of-term exams concentrate mostly on subject matter rather than form; this reality, therefore, does not expand on students' knowledge acquired in high school about text types and the contexts surrounding. As repeated above, there has been a tacit and pervasive assumption that, by the time they enter university, students are linguistically competent and have mastered various genres. This confidence is multiply punctured as there is a rising awareness now, even amongst the so called

hard science faculty, that our students need further training in mastering proficient genre use.

## 6 Genres and writing practices

### 6.1 Best-known and most frequently used genres in Higher Education

#### 6.1.1 Written genres

The most common genres used in almost all disciplines are summaries, abstracts, literature reviews and research articles. Abstracts, for example, may have different forms in different disciplines (research article abstracts in the discipline of mathematics are only two lines long) or they may be similar (abstracts with headings appear both in medical and legal journals). A lab report is obviously preferred in the Sciences Departments, but the skill of summarizing that is necessary for writing the results of an experiment is one that is necessary in all disciplines. In other words, certain writing skills (such as summarizing, paraphrasing, synthesizing ideas or information) are prerequisites for most disciplines, but may be put to use for different text types (i.e., a lab report, observation notes, a book or film review, etc.).

Instruction in HE is mostly lecture-based. This teacher-centred model is sometimes interspersed with questions on the part of the teacher and answers from students. In general, the most frequently used written text is the end-of-term exam in all disciplines. Note-taking, accompanied by handouts, is another frequently used genre in HE. With respect to particular disciplines, the Humanities and Social Sciences prefer argumentative and/or descriptive essays, while other disciplines, such as the Sciences, may prefer multiple-choice tests. The Sciences Departments and the School of Engineering prefer reports and projects; the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry mainly produce medical histories.

The main writing genre that involves active engagement by the student is the assigned paper or seminar paper ('*ergasia*') that has to be prepared at home on the basis of bibliography given by the instructor in class or individually, or as researched by the student. However, apart from the specific departments requiring for graduation this kind of work in greater length and depth of research –which is then called the diploma thesis ('*diplomatiki*')–, a relatively small number of students will opt to do such a major thesis in their final year, as this is not required by other departments, but rather offered as an option in lieu of one or two other courses, and provided a supervisor is available. Nevertheless, in some courses at undergraduate level, students are given the option to write an assigned paper –the equivalent to the 'seminar paper'– on the assumption that only a few students will take up this option.

As already noted above, the situation at the postgraduate level is totally different, where writing up papers and conducting mini research is the norm rather than the exception.

#### 6.1.2 Oral genres

The use of oral genres varies depending on the department and course. Exams and presentations are the two main oral genres. Oral exams may be the only form of assessment for a course or they may supplement end-of-term written exams. Oral presentations can be a component of university courses or research projects students participate in. In some courses there may be a demand for field research, carried out in team-work, which is then presented in class. In some other cases, the odd



inspirational instructor may organize a colloquium with presentation of their students' work that can be also attended by a broader audience.

Students can also engage in discussions on topics set by teachers, particularly in courses that are not only lecture-based. In most foreign language learning courses, developing oral proficiency is a major goal and, therefore, students have more opportunities to interact orally. Techniques for oral presentations are also taught through models and examples in certain departments in the humanities, with criteria for assessment out in the open and up-front, so that students know what is expected of them. In pedagogical and teacher training departments, students may be required to practice teaching in various state schools or in experimental schools run by the universities. Further, in applied science departments, it is expected that there is a greater call for the use of oral genres; for example, in the medical school, students practise by the side of the patient and under the supervision of a qualified clinician. In this context, medical students have to actively participate in the process of collecting and collating data, history taking and reaching diagnoses.

## 6.2 *Genre awareness and genre teaching*

Explicit instruction on the conventions of academic writing is not normally part of the curriculum and may vary greatly depending on the course. Students may receive aid in writing by the course teacher or teaching assistants and/or the course material; additionally, specialized seminars or workshops may be offered so that students can gain knowledge of disciplinary expectations. However, students are expected to master the conventions of academic writing by practising rather than through systematic training. In particular, we have the sense that students learn how to write at university by becoming familiar with what is common practice in the specific discipline and by recognizing what each instructor/lecturer requires of them.

All in all, there are no 'official' guidelines on how to approach a given academic genre. For example, students receive no instruction in how to respond to an exam question; this is probably because it is tacitly accepted that by the time they get to the university, students should have already acquired this writing skill throughout their high school years. Quite often then, students learn by trial and error. In general, university lecturers place more emphasis on developing students' knowledge of the discipline than on the genres associated with the discipline. However, it is worth repeating that explicit instruction on genres is implemented in specifically designed courses which are offered by Foreign Language and Literature Departments and Centers for Foreign Language Teaching.

In particular, the English Departments in both main state Universities in Athens and Thessaloniki offer introductory writing courses called Language Mastery I and II, where students are trained in note taking or making (during lectures and while studying individually), paragraph writing, essay writing, comparisons-contrasts, descriptions, story-telling, argumentation, advertisements, summary writing and oral presentations. In the Department at Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Language Mastery I courses deal mainly with description and narrative, both written and oral. Thus, techniques for the creative writing genre are taught through models and practice exercises. Two other 'genres' used in teaching Language Mastery I are songs and films – which give variety to lessons and also help to improve vocabulary. Use is also made of articles from newspapers and magazines for lexical enrichment and other purposes. Students may also bring articles to stimulate discussion. Extracts from novels or short stories are used as examples of descriptive/narrative writing.

Language Mastery II deals mainly with the ‘genre’ of academic writing – formatting conventions and rules regarding style, lack of bias etc., but also with the genre of advertising and the various techniques used in text and picture to persuade the audience. Students learn to analyze rather than describe, and eventually succeed in reading between the lines (explicatures, implicatures, inferred meanings). They also become conversant with multimodal texts, preparing them for further specialized courses in film and media studies. Equally, at the Department of English Language and Literature of the university in Athens (there are only two such departments in the country), there is a wide range of courses within the curriculum geared to fostering academic linguistic skills: ‘Academic discourse’ is offered within the four-year studies programme, aiming to familiarize students with the language of spoken and written academic texts so that students develop the skills needed for the comprehension and production of academic discourse, while ‘Genres in English’ is another course offered interchangeably, dealing with various media genres, particularly newspapers and magazines, aiming to acquaint students with the structure and the language of these genres (see Ifantidou, 2011). They also offer courses in planning and conducting research, but also in writing theories and practices, amongst others. Similar courses may be offered within the curriculum by other Foreign Language Departments. For instance, the Department of French at Aristotle university of Thessaloniki offers courses in ‘Text analysis and production in Greek, I/II’ and ‘Academic writing techniques’, as well as ‘Creative writing’.

The Centre for Foreign Language Teaching at Aristotle University uses a variation of text types to foster in students the idea of contextualized discourse such as summaries, abstracts, reviews, expository technical essays, reports, etc. Moreover, new genres are generated by new technologies, and students are expected to familiarize themselves with them. Many faculty members use electronic platforms, which are interactive to a certain extent, for uploading teaching materials, quizzes, or even the occasional exam, etc., and for communicating with their students. Several such platforms are made available at almost all universities. Occasionally, courses are offered either centrally by computer services or locally by library services to help students familiarize themselves with the methodology and the new genres involved.

To refer to a specific example of practice, we report below on our teaching of genres at the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching at Aristotle University, which runs courses on English for Specific/Academic purposes. Our aim is to sensitize students to various genres and thus curricula have a genre-based orientation. For example, the English for Law syllabus incorporates legal cases, court decisions, case summaries, moot courts, etc.

The humanities and the social sciences as well as the sciences to a lesser extent ask of their students to produce essays in which they discuss and analyze relationships, ideas, and meanings. Before the finished product is handed in, students produce notes, stories and summaries when attempting to describe or argue their case. Typical assignments also involve an oral presentation on a description, a narration of a story, an argumentative topic and an analysis of an advertisement. There are also written and spoken exercises both in class and at home (before the written and oral assessed assignments) where students practise the aforementioned genres.

Raising the awareness of students about how texts work is also very important. A list of features can be provided to be checked off. This list can be used to compare particular ‘kinds’ of genre, or to compare how writers dealing with the same genre build it in different ways. Such awareness techniques allow for writing exercises of the kind: ‘Take a text in one genre and rewrite in another or with another purpose’.

What might also be picked out are features to do with text flow and how these differ between writing cultures. (Greek vs English for features such as ‘hedging,’ transitions, etc.).

### 6.2.1 Sampling how we foster writing competence

*Sample from literary courses:*

Some typical essay-oriented assignments from the English Department are the following:

a. “The comic and the tragic are mutually exclusive, therefore, to mingle them is to add to the meaning of each.” Discuss the relationship between comic and tragic form in any one of the following: *King Lear*; *The Changeling*

b. “For Freud, dreams are the expression of wishes unacknowledged in waking life. Like a dream, fantasy reveals the inner life of the individual.” How valid do you find a psychoanalytic reading of Gothic (or “fantasy”) novels? Answer this question with specific reference to all three novels read in this course, giving examples from the texts wherever possible.

*Sample from language courses:*

In Language Mastery I, one of the instructors uses the Suzanne Vegas song ‘Luka’ for multiple purposes – first a gapped version of the lyrics is used and students have to give possible alternatives to fill the gaps. Students then listen to identify the actual words. Finally, as homework the students hypothesize about the kind of person Luka is and they write a descriptive paragraph describing his character. These paragraphs are put through a cycle of assessment from peers, themselves, and the instructor, using predetermined assessment criteria. In this way students profit from reading each others’ work and also learn to assess and evaluate in a way that is different from the teacher-led assessment they are used to. Films are also used in this class including *The Queen* and *The Devil Wears Prada*, which stimulate follow-up discussion about character, attitudes, traditions and fashion.

In Language Mastery II, students watch *Billy Elliot* and *The Full Monty*, with pre-viewing questions, while-viewing questions and post-viewing questions. Sometimes there is group writing on some of the themes which emerge from the films such as friendship, loyalty, humour, criminality, prejudice, gender, etc. Students sometimes make use of extracts from films in their oral presentations. In particular, the Language Mastery courses, provided by the School of English (Department of Linguistics), train students in writing different text types (narration, argumentation, summary writing, etc.).

The instructors who teach in the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching use various text types to familiarize their students with equally varying situations and their respective texts, and to assist them in understanding discourse in its functional settings. Such understanding is commensurate with accentuating the rhetorical devices and the lexical and syntactic choices students have to make in order to communicate their message in the foreign language. Some typical assignments from the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching include one from the School of Engineering and one from the School of Dentistry below:

*Sample from Engineering*

a. You are an Engineer working for Home Company and have to write an email to Contractor A, the company that has been contracted to build a PSA unit at your plant. After revising the emails studied in class (lexical choices, syntactic structures,

collocations, terminology, etc.) email Contractor A that they can't be paid unless their start-up Engineer stays on to complete a particular task on site.

Suggested words to use: *payment, invoice, inform.*

#### *Sample from Dentistry*

b. A patient has been given an appointment to have a tooth extracted under a general anesthetic. What instructions should be given? Explain why each is important. Briefly describe how you would care for the patient once the tooth is extracted until the patient is ready to go home.

In a course offered to Law students by the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching, special emphasis is placed on teaching various text types associated with Law (i.e., court decisions, case summaries, etc.).

#### *6.2.2 Genres, intertextuality and plagiarism*

Genres are not insular but rather abut on each other in various ways relating to lexical, structural or rhetorical features. Indeed, we may talk of compositional genres (not related to music) rather than typical ones, as the one type may benefit from loans from another. So, texts do not intermingle only within the same type (genre) in a vertical dimension (time/historical axis), but also across various genres on a horizontal dimension. Intertextuality, then, may be defined both vertically and horizontally. Following Kristeva's (1989: 989) claim that "the text is ... a productivity ... a permutation of texts", we view intertextuality as a dialogue of texts. As such, intertextuality can potentially be present in every disciplinary genre and is immensely beneficial for the promotion of research and knowledge. The big issue in academia, however, is how intertextuality is put to practice, namely, how we cite and use the sources we fall back on. To the best of our knowledge, there is no specific research on this issue in Greece, but lack of knowledge of right use of sources can be anticipated. Hence, we expect issues of copyright infringement. "Using your own words" is a motto that university students are made aware of. Still, issues of plagiarism are dealt with only within the frame of courses on teaching research methodology; such courses are, unfortunately, few at university level.

Until quite recently, universities in Greece did not seem to have an ethics committee, and, if they did, it was rather inactive. Except for the Open University, university sites did not include any advice on the issue of copyright and the risks of plagiarism to safeguard their students' interests. However, as often is the case, faculty members have been ahead of their institutions and in their electronic learning platforms, and some of us have included specific links and advice to brief students on the risk of committing -most often inadvertently- plagiarism. This situation has now changed and universities offer their faculty the use of various plagiarism checkers and software (s.a. Ephorus) to help us check on copyright infringement in students' research.

#### *6.2.3 Textbooks on academic writing in Greece*

To the best of our knowledge, while there is an abundant bibliography in Greek on essay writing for secondary education, also uploaded on the relevant Ministry's site, there are scarcely any books on academic writing in Greek for tertiary education, although these are definitely needed. References cited in the bibliography are some of the books used for classes on academic writing in English at university level. In

addition, teachers of English for Specific/Academic Purposes and English Department lecturers have compiled booklets/class notes on academic skills in English which they use in their courses. However, most language instructors and faculty members are either competent or proficient in English, and it is assumed that they resource the abundant bibliography in the English language.

### 6.3 *From academic genres to genres used at workplaces*

Regular classes and pilot classes run by the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching at Aristotle University are genre-based. Some of these pilot classes were designed after the instructor conducted a needs analysis by asking professionals rather than students as the latter cannot fully anticipate what needs the workforce expects them to fulfill. Disciplines in the humanities, with a focus on teaching, offer classes, such as curriculum design and test design, which future professionals will find helpful later in the workplace. When it comes to engineering departments, however, the complaint often voiced by industry is that HE does not sufficiently prepare graduates for the demands of the workplace. Engineers, for example, are not familiar with various text-types required of them when they work for plants, such as how to write reports and certificates related to the completion of tasks and full-scale jobs. At some universities (e.g., at Aristotle University), Career Services, liaising between the university and the market, often organize sessions familiarizing graduating students with various genres required by the workplace, such as CV writing and interview-behaviour codes. These Career Services have faculty delegates to liaise with particular departments (one of the authors, E. Kitis, has liaised between the Careers office and the English Department for several years).

In the next section, we will briefly review the Bologna Process from the point of view of writing in Europe's HE, and particularly in relation to HE in Greece, its awareness-raising and development of genre-writing processes and subsequent or possible institutionalization procedures.

## **7 The Bologna Process in relation to writing**

### 7.1 *Part I: General*

The first part of this section reports on the more general situation in respect of the Bologna Process, with a close eye on Greece's participation (or lack of it), registering the most relevant sources available mostly on line after an extensive research (citing all on-line references would be unrealistic due to their big number). In the second part we record our perceptions of the interrelationship between the Bologna Process and the issue of writing practices as perceived nowadays in the broader background.

Launched in 1999, the Bologna Process is an initiative to transform education in Europe and create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. The declaration signed in Bologna in 1999 by 29 countries has now been signed by 46 countries. All signatory countries agreed to promote:

- Qualifications frameworks based on a three-cycle system
- Mobility of staff and students
- EHEA in a global context
- Joint Degrees
- Recognition of degrees across the EHEA

- The Social Dimension of Education
- Lifelong Learning
- Stocktaking

A Ministerial Conference is held biennially (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012) and the Bologna Follow-Up Groups (BFUG), preparing the ministerial conferences, are held every six months. Consultative Members include:

- the European Commission
- Council of Europe
- BUSINESSEUROPE
- UNESCOPEPES
- European Centre for Higher Education
- EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education)
- EUA (European University Association)
- ESU (European Students' Union Council of Europe)
- ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)
- EI (Education International)-- Pan-European Structure

According to *'The first decade of working on the European Higher Education Area. Vol 1 Detailed Assessment Report, The Bologna Process Independent Assessment. Volume 1 Detailed Assessment Report'*, devised by the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), the International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel and ECOTEC, 44 countries have signed the Lisbon Recognition out of the 46 EHEA countries. Italy has signed the convention but has not yet ratified it. Greece has not yet signed the convention as admitted in the 2007 and 2009 Greek National Reports. The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) is a multilateral legal framework designed to facilitate the international recognition of higher education qualifications and periods of study, and acted as a precursor to the Bologna Process.

One of the instruments mentioned in the LRC is the Diploma Supplement. The Joint European Diploma Supplement (DS) is a tool that can support transparency and recognition. The DS provides information regarding the level of the qualification, the type and status of the awarding institution and the programme followed by the applicant. Information regarding workload, contents and results is provided together with important additional information (e.g. grading scale applied), thus easing the work of recognition authorities. According to national experts, Greece and Italy have not complied with the DS requirements even though they say they have in their national reports. Specifically for Greece, the 2007 Greek National Report mentions that "Law 3374 issued on 2/8/2005 among other issues regulated the establishment of the Diploma Supplement. Therefore, from the academic year 2006-2007 all students who will graduate successfully from Hellenic Higher Education Institutions will be provided with a Diploma Supplement issued both in Hellenic and English, automatically and free of charge. A Ministerial Decree has ensured that DS issued by HEIs is fully corresponding to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement Format" (15). Similarly in the 2009 Greek National Report it is stated that "Law 3374/2005 determined the issuing of a Diploma Supplement, based on the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES, automatically and free of charge, both in Greek and in English. According to the above law the award of DS is obligatory for all HEIs"(30) (see URLs in references).

As far as Recognized Prior Learning (RPL) is concerned, which widens participation and access to HE, Greece is listed among the countries where some initiatives for the development of national level regulations for RPL have been undertaken, but where they are not yet in use. Other such countries include: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Romania, Russia and Ukraine.

A study by the ‘*Education International Pan-European Structure: On the Occasion of the Bologna Process Celebration Conference*’ (March 2010), titled “Enhancing Quality: Academics’ Perceptions of the Bologna Process”, presents the findings of a study undertaken with 34 unions representing higher education staff across 26 European countries. It is a study of academics’ perceptions of the implementation of the impact of the Bologna Process in their respective countries over the reference period 2005-2009, with an examination of how this has affected academics in particular, together with an appreciation of other ongoing reforms which are taking place in parallel to the Bologna Process, and which also impact on the daily lives and working conditions of academics. Greece does not figure in the table of respondent unions. In responding to the questionnaire sent to them the Unions indicate that while curricular reforms, **the increase in courses taught in English**, the diversification of programmes and the rise in accreditation processes are a direct consequence of the Bologna Process, other trends do not directly arise out of a direct influence of the Bologna Process. This is the only mention we have come across of English studies in our research in this respect, but there is no specific mention of writing practices and processes *per se*.

There have been three national reports prepared by each country (2009, 2007, 2005) and submitted to the Bologna Process. We have checked the Greek and the UK reports. They are technical reports evaluating the country’s compliance with the Bologna Action lines and objectives. There is never any mention of writing or any other skill for that matter in any of these reports. According to the Greek report, Greece has organized one seminar titled “Putting European Higher Education Area on the Map: Developing Strategies for Attractiveness” (June 2006). However, we can note that a conference held in Ukraine in 2008, ‘*Teaching English Academic Writing in Ukraine: Problems and Prospects*’, mentioned the Bologna Process in one of the conference themes. The theme was the “Importance of teaching English academic writing in the light of the Bologna process”.

## 7.2 Part II: The impact of the Bologna Process on writing

Firstly, it must be noted that Greek universities have resisted the government’s various attempts to enforce the Bologna Process directive for a shorter undergraduate study programme, not exceeding the period of 3 years. Consequently, they have not adjusted to the Bologna framework, and as yet most study programmes span a period of 4 years consisting of 8 semesters, and in some cases, studies may span a 5-year period (Engineering Schools) or even a 6-year period (Medical School).

As the Bologna Process does not explicitly touch upon academic issues pertaining to teaching skills in the classroom, it is hard to discern what impact, if any, the Process has had on academic writing. It is only indirectly that we can presume such an influence on writing in academia. If the Bologna Process has been the condensation of a general climate about enhancing the quality of education through the promotion of interdisciplinary training and transferable skills, and creating flexible learning paths, then it has influenced writing practices even if abstractly.

In the last decade, in Greece, departments especially in the humanities (e.g. English Departments, Centres for Foreign Language Teaching) have introduced various text-type writings, summary writing, reports, abstracts, reviews, technical essays (cf. Ifantidou, 2011). Other disciplines, which are more intent on teaching content, have yet to still make the transition to incorporating writing in the curriculum. The most noticeable omission in the teaching of writing in Greece across the board in all departments is the fact that students are not encouraged to revise their writing. Writing is still treated as a product rather than a process one has to intently labour at. Class sizes are often forbidding for adopting an approach that would treat writing skills as a developing expertise, especially as a tutorial system is almost totally absent in the Greek university reality.

The writing practices which have been introduced have not been the direct effect of processes like the Bologna Process, or directives that have come down from Ministries of Education or other policy centres. They have been, however, the direct effect of changing practices explored by individual academics influenced by their own undergraduate/graduate studies at universities abroad and trained to listen to the workplace. This type of writing is the result of discourse springing from movements/philosophies in academia on both sides of the literature/ linguistics divide, such as post-structuralism, phenomenology, pragmatics, discourse analysis, rhetoric, etc., which explore the interrelationships between things, people, ideas and contexts. The teaching practices of individual academics and departments that arose from this climate, within the context of a European policy for greater unification and harmonization of education programmes and degrees in HE, may have partly initiated, but have definitely contributed to, processes like the Bologna Process, which in turn gave rise, albeit abstractly, to even more such practices. But these practices cannot be accounted for numerically.

Writing practices of individual academics have seeped up into the decision-making rationale of policy makers, and action lines like the Bologna Process have trickled down and affected day-to-day writing practices. This recursive influence indicates a top-down and a bottom-up approach, where it is hard to tell who influenced whom, policymakers influencing academics or vice versa.

## **8 Conclusion**

Concluding our report, it is fair to note that in Greece's HE system there is a lack of institutional units, centres or resources (e.g., sites) run by, or attached to, the universities for fostering study skills, research skills and academic skills in their students. Since universities are still centrally funded to a great extent, units, bodies and all faculty and parties involved in the field must join forces to raise awareness in decision-makers and governing bodies that students' needs for 'peripheral' linguistic and academic skills, surrounding, or underpinning and propping up, their disciplinary studies, are vital for their academic achievement in their specific fields of study and specialisms. The administration and management of the centres for language teaching that employ highly-qualified competent linguists, familiar with the students' specific needs for academic linguistic skills across the board, lag well behind their lecturers' forward thinking and insight into students' needs, probably due to paucity of resources, lack of funding and appreciation of what needs to be done, combined with a reluctance to engage in any major reorganization of those units. On the other hand, foreign language departments, severely hit by the current financial crisis and cuts on



funding, struggle to follow international trends in education reflecting their students' needs, introducing new courses tailored to students' needs in relation to the broader graduate employment market, is only a refreshing pocket in the whole student population of HE, as are the courses in EAP offered by enlightened lecturers in language centres. All this needs to be changed, and centrally instituted and managed so that HE can boast well organized and adequately funded language centres. Language centres need to become a vital part of the HE institutional landscape in Greece.

Naturally, one might argue that in the Greek HE context there is no acute need for such language centres since the majority of the student population are native speakers of Greek and the linguistic medium of their studies is the Greek language. However, this is a false perception as is widely acknowledged by tutors and lecturers across departments that their students' linguistic skills are quite poor debilitating their academic achievement and that they need specific courses to equip them with the skills of academic writing, note-taking, lecture-listening, etc. as well as with research methodology skills and awareness of copyright issues. As we have seen, the curricula of Schools or Centres of Modern Greek are geared towards foreign or Erasmus students wishing to acquire the Greek language and they do not cater to the Greek student population and their academic needs. Language centres for foreign languages, on the other hand, were originally established with a brief to teach foreign languages to university students, and it is only owing to their lecturers' high qualifications and competence that greatly needed EAP courses are offered to students who already are sufficiently competent in the English language. However, no such courses are offered in the Greek language to enable students to cope with study demands and enhance their academic performance as students.

Moreover, both pre-sessional and in-sessional courses in academic English seem to be called for in the newly founded International Hellenic University, esp. as the various departments' curricula need to be competitive in competently training their students so as to score high employment rates in the graduate market. It is, however, hoped that the IHU will soon introduce such courses within its curriculum, as we are in a position to know that the governing body is aware of this need.

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