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CERLIS Series
Volume 1

Stefania M. Maci & Michele Sala (eds)

Genre Variation in Academic Communication
Emerging Disciplinary Trends

CELSB
Bergamo

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CERLIS SERIES Vol. 1

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DAVID BANKS

The Implications of Genre Related Choices in Early Issues of the *Journal des Sçavans* and the *Philosophical Transactions*

1. Introduction

The year 1665 was an important one for the history of academic writing. It was the year that saw the founding of the first two academic periodicals. The first in the field was the *Journal des Sçavans*, whose first issue appeared on 5 January in Paris; this was followed two months later by the *Philosophical Transactions*, whose first issue appeared in London on 6 March. It is significant that both of these publications still exist.

In this chapter I shall give some historical background. I shall then look in detail at editorial decisions in terms of genre and scope, and the effects of these on the contents of the journals in question. I shall then look at a small selection of linguistic features, showing that these derive directly from the editorial decisions which had been made. Thus, I hope to show that those editorial decisions stand at the fulcrum between the historical context, and the texts which are produced.

2. The *Journal des Sçavans*

The *Journal des Sçavans* was founded by Denis de Sallo. He did so in the middle of the reign of Louis XIV, the 'Sun-King', who reigned from 1643 to 1715, the longest reign in the history of France. At that

time, France had a highly centralized government. The predominant political theory was that of the Divine Right of Kings, which meant that the state, in the person of the king had total control. Moreover, France was the most powerful, and the richest country in Europe, as well as being its intellectual and cultural centre. When Denis de Sallo founded the *Journal des Sçavans*, he did so at the instigation of Colbert, Louis XIV's chancellor or first minister, whose objective was the state control of new knowledge. While new, and even revolutionary, ideas were acceptable, and of value in the academic field, and could even be harnessed to the glory of the king (Licoppe 1994), everything had to be done to avoid the danger of revolutionary ideas seeping into the political domain; hence the need for state control (Daremberg 1859, Cacheris 1860, Paris 1903, Birn 1964, Morgan 1928, Vittu 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, Peiffer/Vittu 2008, Camusat 2011 [1734]).

In 'L'imprimeur au Lecteur', where the editor explains what he intends to publish, we find the following: book announcements and reviews, obituary notices, experiments, discoveries, inventions and observations, legal decisions, and – anything else of interest! In the event, as we shall see, the *Journal des Sçavans* was predominantly made up of book reviews.

3. The *Philosophical Transactions*

The historical context in England in the seventeenth century was totally different to that in France. During that century England went through one of the most turbulent periods in her history. The Civil War began in 1642, and ended in 1649 with the capture, trial and execution of the king, Charles I. Cromwell governed from 1649 until his death in 1658. This period was marked by Puritanical repression. Before dying, Cromwell appointed his son, Richard, to succeed him, but Richard did not have the same taste for power as his father, and in the following year 1659, he resigned. This left the way open for the restoration of the monarchy, and Charles II was brought back in 1660.

After the repression of the Cromwellian period, the Restoration was felt as a time of new-found freedom and optimism. It should also be noted that while the Divine Right of Kings had been the dominant theory in early seventeenth century England, Charles II was brought to a country to be ruled, according to the official document, by "King, Lords, and commons"; the absolute power of the monarchy had disappeared (Hill 1969 [1961]). Although the Divine Right of Kings had been the official doctrine before the Civil War, this was no longer the case after 1660.

It was in this context that Henry Oldenburg founded the *Philosophical Transactions* in 1665. He was one of the two secretaries of the Royal Society, and over the years, he had become the centre of a network of scientific correspondence. Such correspondence was not private in the contemporary sense: it was generally understood that these letters were to be copied, sent on, read at meetings, or otherwise disseminated. The fact that something had been written in such a letter could be, and was, used in priority disputes (Gotti 2006). Henry Oldenburg, unlike most members of the Royal Society, was not a *virtuoso*, that is, he was not a gentleman scientist with private financial means. So he had to earn his living, and he conceived the idea of a newsletter of scientific information, or 'intelligence', as he called it, as a way of augmenting his income. Although the *Philosophical Transactions* was ordered by the Royal Society, and thus had its sanction, it remained the private property of Oldenburg, who thus retained total editorial and financial responsibility (Lyons 1944, Bluhm 1960, Hall 2002). In his introduction to the first issue his main interest seems to be discoveries and inventions.

4. Editorial decisions

Both of these editors took decisions relating to genre and scope which were significant for the future directions of their respective journals. In the case of Denis de Sallo, in practice, his journal turns out to be basically one of book reviews. In terms of scope it was his intention to

cover the whole field of new knowledge, including classics, history and theology. This stems from the basic reasons for establishing the periodical in the first place. Since it fitted into Colbert's control strategy, it was natural that it should attempt to cover the whole field of new knowledge. If new knowledge is what you want to control there is no point in controlling only part of it. And the main way in which new knowledge had been disseminated up to that point was through book publication.

Oldenburg, however, was involved in a commercial operation. His public was the members of the Royal Society, and like-minded people. What they were interested in was 'natural philosophy', or science and technology in our terms. The word 'science' had not yet acquired its contemporary meaning (Banks 2004). Moreover, the basic material he had available was his correspondence, so that was obviously the main source on which he could draw.

5. Corpus

For the purposes of this study I have used a small corpus, or sample, of issues of the *Journal des Sçavans* and the *Philosophical Transactions*. This consists of the first three issues of the *Journal des Sçavans*, and the first two issues of the *Philosophical Transactions* for each of the years 1665, 1675, 1685, and 1694. I have taken more issues of the *Journal des Sçavans* since, in general, they are shorter than the corresponding issues of the *Philosophical Transactions*. The year 1694 (rather than 1695) was selected because the issue of the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1694 was not accessible at the time of carrying out this study. Table 1 shows the editors of the relevant issues of the two journals.

	Journal des Sçavans	*Philosophical Transactions*
1665	Denis de Sallo	Henry Oldenburg
1675	L'Abbé Gallois	Henry Oldenburg
1685	L'Abbé de la Roque	Robert Plot
1694	Louis Cousin	Richard Waller

Table 1. Editors.

Denis de Sallo only lasted 13 weeks as editor of the *Journal des Sçavans*. His open support for the Gallican church attracted the animosity of the Church of Rome, which used its power to have the publication closed after the thirteenth issue. However, it was perceived as being of value, and so was resurrected at the beginning of the following year under the editorship of the Abbé Gallois. He was highly able, but had many other interests and duties, with the result that the periodical appeared infrequently. He remained editor until 1674, when the Abbé de la Roque took over. He was hard working, but without the natural ability of his predecessors, and under his editorship the journal began to lose prestige. In 1687 the journal was taken over by Louis Cousin, who reestablished its reputation. He remained editor until 1701 (Morgan 1928). These editors were all appointed by Colbert or his successors.

Henry Oldenburg continued editing the journal he had founded until his death in 1677. It was subsequently edited by various secretaries of the Royal Society, including Robert Plot from 1683 to 1687, and Richard Waller from 1690 to 1694 (Atkinson 1999).

Table 2 shows the number of pages of text, the number of items, and the average length of items for each issue, and the average length of items for the issues studied in each year, for the *Journal des Sçavans*. It can be seen that the length of each issue is stable over time, and that the average length of items is stable too. The length of items remains more or less within a range of one and a half to two and a half pages.

	pp excluding editorial	*items*	*av. length*	*av. length/year*
5 Jan 65	11	8	1.4	1.5
12 Jan 65	12	6	2.0	
19 Jan 65	11	8	1.4	
2 Jan 75	12	5	2.4	

14 Jan 75	12	4	3.0	2.6
28 Jan 75	12	5	2.4	
8 Jan 85	8	6	1.3	1.5
15 Jan 85	12	8	1.5	
22 Jan 85	12	7	1.7	
4 Jan 94	9.5	3	3.2	2.5
11 Jan 94	11.5	4	2.9	
18 Jan 94	11.5	6	1.9	

Table 2. Pages and item length in the *Journal des Sçavans*.

Table 3 gives the corresponding information for the *Philosophical Transactions*.

	pp excluding editorial	*items*	*av. length*	*av. length/year*
6 Mar 65	14.5	10	1.5	1.9
3 Apr 65	15.5	6	2.6	
25 Mar 75	27	7	3.9	3.9
26 Apr 75	19.5	5	3.9	
28 Jan 85	37	12	3.1	4.5
23 Feb 85	39	5	7.8	
Jan 94	38	9	4.2	3.8
Feb 94	34.5	10	3.5	

Table 3. Pages and item length in the *Philosophical Transactions*.

In this journal there is a considerable increase in the size of the issues, particularly between 1665 and 1675. There is a further increase by 1685, but then it appears to remain fairly stable. There is a corresponding increase in the length of items, again particularly between 1665 and 1675. Thereafter, it is relatively stable, with the notable exception of the issue for February 1685.

6. Genre choice

Table 4 shows the different genres of the items included in the *Journal des Sçavans*.

		Book review	*Letter extract*	*Article*	*Legal report*	*List*
Jan 1665	5	7	1	-	-	-
	12	5	-	-	1	-
	19	6	1	1	-	-
Jan 1675	2	5	-	-	-	-
	14	4	-	-	-	-
	28	4	-	1	-	-
Jan 1685	8	4	1	1	-	1
	15	7	-	-	-	1
	22	6	-	-	-	1
Jan 1694	4	3	-	-	-	-
	11	4	-	-	-	-
	18	5	-	-	-	-
Total		*60*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*3*

Table 4. Genre of items in the *Journal des Sçavans*.

There are 70 items in the *Journal des Sçavans* sample. Of the 70 items found in these 12 issues, no less than 60 (86%) are book reviews. Thus the classification of the *Journal des Sçavans* as a book review journal is totally justified. Other types of item only appear on rare occasions. Table 5 shows the corresponding information for the *Philosophical Transactions.*

	1665		*1675*		*1685*		*1694*		*Tot.*
	6 Mar	3 Apr	25 Mar	26 Apr	28 Jan	23 Feb	Jan	Feb	
News item	6	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	8
Letter	-	-	1	-	3	1	1	2	9
Letter extr	1	4	1	1	-	2	1	2	12
Article	1	-	2	2	5	-	5	3	18
Book rev	-	1	3	2	3	1	2	2	14
Book ann.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Obituary	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
List	-	-	-	-	-1	-	-	-	1
Editorial	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	4

Table 5. Genre of items of the *Philosophical Transactions*.

There are 68 items in the *Philosophical Transactions* sample. It will be noted that the news item, that is, an item written up by Oldenburg himself on the basis of information received in his correspondence, is

the dominant genre in the first issue, but it rarely appears thereafter. Book reviews, which were so dominant in the *Journal des Sçavans*, here account for only 14 of the 68 items (21%). The major genre appears to be letters and letter extracts; taken together these account for 21 of the 68 items (31%). If to this we add the articles, most of which he received in his correspondence, the others being papers read at the Royal Society, we have a total of 39 items (57%).

Although Oldenburg began, in the first issue by writing up the material himself in the form of news items, he rapidly adopted a strategy of using verbatim material wherever possible (i.e. letters, letter extracts, and articles). He wrote himself when items were too long and had to be summarized, or when they were in a foreign language and had to be translated (Banks 2009). Even so, occasionally, items were printed in languages other than English. In this sample the issue for 25 March 1675 has a letter extract in Latin, and that for 26 April 1675 an article in Latin; the issue for January 1694 includes a letter in French and 2 articles in Latin, and the issue for February 1694 an article in Latin.

7. Scope

It is not always easy to attribute contemporary disciplinary fields to seventeenth century texts. For example, the terms ‘physics’ and ‘chemistry’ did not then cover precisely the same areas as they do today; and the distinction between ‘medicine’ and ‘biology’ is fairly fuzzy. Some claim (Gascoigne 1985) that one should use the categories of the period, but such a categorization would be relatively opaque for contemporary readers unfamiliar with the seventeenth century categories. I feel that using modern terminology, even if the categories do not always fit perfectly, gives the contemporary reader a better idea of the areas covered by these texts.

In Table 6 the items contained in the *Journal des Sçavans* sample have been analysed in terms of their disciplinary fields. One of the items has two distinct parts in different disciplinary fields; these have been

counted separately, thus giving 71 items, one more than in Table 4. The scientific fields have been placed at the top of the Table, with humanities subjects towards the bottom. It will be seen that the scientific sector, from physics down to and including technology accounts for 13 of the 71 items (18%). Included in this is medicine, the most common item in the scientific sector, which accounts for 6 items (8%). However, it is evident that humanities subjects dominate. The commonest of the humanities subjects, indeed the commonest field in the whole sample, is history which accounts for 15 items (21%), more than the whole of the science sector taken together. Theology accounts for a further 10 items (14%). However, this underestimates the importance of religious questions, for some of the history is church history, law is sometimes canon law, and biography is sometimes hagiography.

	Jan 1665			*Jan 1675*			*Jan 1685*			*Jan 1694*			*TOT*
	5	12	19	2	14	28	8	15	22	4	11	18	
Physics	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Botany	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Astronomy	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Geology	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Medicine	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	6
Technology	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Mathematics	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3
Philosophy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Language	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Art	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Music	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
History	2	2	2	-	-	1	1	3	2	-	1	1	15
Geography	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	4
Law	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Theology	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	2	10
Biography	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Classics	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Literature	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	6
Bibliography	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	5

Table 6. Disciplinary fields of items in the *Journal des Sçavans*.

The corresponding information for the *Philosophical Transactions* is given in Table 7.

	1665		*1675*		*1685*		*1694*		*Tot*
	6 Mar	3 Apr	25 Mar	26 Apr	28 Jan	23 Feb	Jan	Feb	
Physics	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	5
Chemistry	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	3
Biology	2	3	-	-	2	3	-	4	14
Botany		-	-	1	1	-	-	1	3
Astronomy	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	7
Geology	2	-	2	1	1	-	1	-	7
Medicine	-	-	1	1	2	1	5	3	13
Technology	1	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	7
Mathematics	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Philosophy	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Art	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
General	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	1	5
Misc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

Table 7. Disciplinary fields of items in the *Philosophical Transactions*.

Here again there is one item with two distinct sections which have been counted separately, thus giving a total of 69 items. The scientific sector, again from physics down to and including technology, accounts for no less than 52 of the 69 items (75%). This includes biology, with 14 items (20%), medicine with 13 (19%), while astronomy, geology, and technology have 7 items each (10%).

The concentration of the *Philosophical Transactions* on 'scientific' subjects is quite clear, with 75% of the items devoted to this area, compared to the more general approach of the *Journal des Sçavans* where only 18% of the items have been classified as scientific. Subject areas found in the *Philosophical Transactions* but not in the *Journal des Sçavans* sample are chemistry and biology; subject areas found in the *Journal des Sçavans*, but not in the *Philosophical Transactions* are language, music, history, geography, law, theology, biography, classics, literature and bibliography. Thus the *Journal des Sçavans* has a wide range of humanities subjects which do not appear in the *Philosophical Transactions*.

8. Linguistic features

It is my contention that the linguistic features of these texts result from the editorial choices made by de Sallo and Oldenburg. I shall give three examples based on previous studies (Banks 2010a, 2010b, forthcoming). These are based, admittedly, on small samples, but produce results which seem perfectly coherent in terms of the context and editorial choices from which they derive. The examples I shall give are of process types, types of theme, and modality. The terminology is mainly that of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 2004, Banks 2005), but this is, I hope, sufficiently transparent to be comprehensible to readers not familiar with the theory.

The study of process types is based on an analysis of a small sample of 556 clauses from the *Journal des Sçavans*, and 377 clauses from the *Philosophical Transactions*. Table 8 shows the distribution of process types in the two journals.

	Journal des Sçavans	*Philosophical Transactions*
Material	18%	44%
Mental	19%	6%
Relational	30%	39%
Verbal	27%	6%
Existential	6%	5%

Table 8. Process types.

Material processes deal with actions and events in the physical world; mental processes deal with cerebral events, of a cognitive, perceptive or affective nature; relational processes state relationships between two entities or between an entity and one of its characteristics; verbal processes are processes of communication; and existential processes simply state existence. The common factor in the two periodicals is the feature of relational process, 30% in the *Journal des Sçavan*s, and 39% in the *Philosophical Transactions*. Relational processes are basically descriptive showing that both these journals are interested in

describing the world as it is. The following are examples from the *Journal des Sçavans*.

(1) […] que le iugement qu'on vient de faire, *est* bien different de celuy qu'on fit alors.
[that the opinion we have just given is quite different to the one we made previously]

(2) Car le monde *seroit* bien aise de deuenir habile sans auoir toute la peine qu'il faut presentement prendre pour acquerir cette qualité.
[for the world would be very happy to become skillful without all the care it is necessary to take at the moment to attain this quality]

(3) Mais beaucoup de monde trouue que ce liure *est* trop remply d'iniures […]
[But many people think this book is too full of insults]

The following are examples from the *Philosophical Transactions.*

(4) At the lower part of it, *is* a hole, some 9. or 10. inches square, for the taking out of the Ashes […]

(5) Though the Invention of breaking with ease, and dispatch, hard Rocks, *may* **be** useful on several occasions, the benefit **is** incomparably great […]

(6) […] That it *had* no sign of any Nose in the usual place, nor had it any, in any other place of the Head, unless the double Bag CC, that grew out of the midst of the forehead, *were* some rudiment of it.

There are nevertheless significant differences. The second most common process in the *Journal des Sçavans* is verbal process, which accounts for 27% of the processes. These verbal processes are usually concerned with what the authors of the books under review are communicating in their books, and what is being said about those books. The following are examples.

(7) […] qui *fit* dans son histoire vne description tres exacte des ceremonies qui s'obseruent à la Messe […]
[who, in his history, gave a very exact description of the ceremonies which are observed at mass]

(8) Monsieur Sorel *se propose* donc dans ce liure deux choses.

[Monsieur Sorel proposes to do two things in this book]

(9) On ne comprendroit rien au dessein de ce liure, si on ne *disoit* en peu de mots ce qui y a donné lieu.
[Nothing would be understood about the object of this book if we did not briefly explain what gave rise to it]

In the *Philosophical Transactions*, on the other hand, the commonest process, even more frequent than relational process, is material process, which accounts for 44% of the processes. These relate things being done and things happening in the physical world. By comparison, only 18% of the processes in the *Journal des Sçavans* are material. The following are examples of material processes from the *Philosophical Transactions*.

(10) […] this Ash-hole *is immediately stopt* so close, as Air *cannot possibly get in* at any part of it.

(11) […] so as one man *may manage* the Hammer, while another *holds* the Tool or Piercer.

(12) […] Mr. *Boyle*, who *went* into the Stable where the *Colt* lay, and *got* the Head hastily and crudely cut off […]

This underlines the facts that the *Journal des Sçavans* is concerned with argument and discussion, and hence with communication, while the *Philosophical Transactions* is interested in physical action and events. This itself reflects the decision by Oldenburg to restrict his journal to 'natural philosophy', and that of de Sallo to cover the whole range of human knowledge, including a wide range of humanities subjects.

My second example is a semantic categorization of themes. Theme is the speaker's starting point, and in both English and French is realized by being placed in initial position in the clause. The categorization is based on that developed in Banks (2008). This study is based on an analysis of 276 clauses from the *Journal des Sçavans*, and 377 from the *Philosophical Transactions*. Table 9 gives the distribution of the semantic categories of themes in the two journals.

	Journal des Sçavans	*Philosophical Transactions*
Object of study	8%	77%
Experiment	-	4%
Author	12%	-
Other humans	24%	5%
Intra-text	-	4%
Inter-text	29%	1%
Existential	9%	1%
Mental/Argument	17%	1%
Time	1%	7%

Table 9. Semantic classification of topical themes.

It will be seen that the most frequent category in the *Journal des Sçavans* is that of 'Inter-text', that is, references to texts other than the item in the *Journal des Sçavans* itself. These account for 29% of the themes, and are usually references to the book under review. The following are examples.

(13) Il y a eu en peu de temps deux editions de ce liure : l'vne à Rome, & l'autre à Paris. *C*'est vne collection de toutes les regles des Moines.
[In a short space of time there have been two editions of this book: one in Rome and the other in Paris. It is a exhaustive collection of monastic rules]

(14) *Ce vocabulaire* a desia esté Imprimé plusieurs fois […]
[This vocabulary has already been printed several times]

(15) *Ce* n'est pas tant icy vne histoire, que des reflexions sur les festes & sur les autres mysteres de la vie de la Vierge Marie.
[This is not so much a history as reflexions on the feasts and other mysteries of the life of the Virgin Mary]

The second most frequent category in the *Journal des Sçavans* is that of 'Other humans', or humans other than the author of the item in the *Journal des Sçavans*. These account for 24% of the themes. They are usually references to the authors of the book under review. The following are examples;

(16) *l'Abbé d'Aniane qui en a esté le compliateur*, viuoit enuiron l'an 820.
[The Abbée d'Aniane who was its complier lived roundabout the year 820]

(17) *Celuy qui en est Autheur*, ne fait que rapporter ce qui se trouue dans les principaux Commentateurs de L'Escriture Sainte …
[The person who is the author does no more than report what is found in the main commentators on the Holy Scriptures]

(18) *L'Amy de M. Patin* se plaint donc de trois choses.
[M. Patin's friend thus complains about three things]

This feature is totally different in the *Philosophical Transactions*, where we find that a massive 77% of the themes relate to the 'Object of study', that is the item or phenomenon, that is being experimented on, or observed. The following are examples:

(19) And *this Pipe* is still lengthened, as the *Adit* or Pit advanceth […]

(20) *The steeled end* is so shaped, as makes it most apt to pierce the Rock […]…

(21) […] but *the other parts of it* could not be so well distinguished, because the eye had been much bruised by the handling […]

Thus we see that the *Journal des Sçavans* decides to highlight, as theme, books and their authors, while in the *Philosophical Transactions*, it is the object or phenomenon under study that is so highlighted.

My final example is that of modality. This is based on a very small sample of 68 modal expressions from the *Journal des Sçavans*, and 369 from the *Philosophical Transactions*. Table 10 shows the distribution of epistemic, dynamic and deontic modality in the two periodicals.

	Journal des Sçavans	*Philosophical Transactions*
Epistemic	26%	19%
Dynamic	51%	77%
Deontic	22%	4%

Table 10. Types of modality.

The most common type of modality in both periodicals is dynamic modality. However, this is much more the case in the *Philosophical Transactions*, where it accounts for 77%, than in the *Journal des*

Sçavans, where it accounts for 51%. Epistemic modality is of the same order in both, 26% in the *Journal des Sçavans*, and 19%, in the *Philosophical Transactions*. But the most notable feature of the *Journal des Sçavans* is the presence of 22% deontic modality, which is highly marginal in the *Philosophical Transactions*. Thus, despite being the least frequent type of modality this nevertheless seems to be a distinguishing feature of the *Journal des Sçavans*. The following are examples.

(22) […] où il ne croist point de vin, il *faut* que les Moines benissent le Seigneur sans murmurer.
[where wine does not grow, the monks must bless the Lord without complaining]

(23) Comme on ne peut auoir trop de Vocabulaires, il *faut* auoir celuy-ci […]
[Since you can't have too many vocabularies, you must have this one]

(24) Mais c'est dequoy on se plaint, que M. Patin ait nommé Sauot , où il ne *deuoit* pas le faire ; & qu'il ait supprimé son nom, lors qu'il le *deuoit* nommer.
[But what we are complaining about is that M. Patin named Savot when he shouldn't have, and that he suppressed his name where he should have named him]

On the other hand dynamic modality, accounting for 77% of the modal expression in the *Philosophical Transactions*, must be considered the distinguishing feature of that journal. The following are examples.

(25) Now that there *may* be no want of such fresh Air, the Fire *must* always be kept burning in the Chimney […]

(26) After the stroke of the Hammer, he that holds the Piercer *is to* turn it a little on its point, so that the Edges or Angles at the point *may* all strike upon a new place; and so it *must* still be shifted after very stroke […]

(27) He advertiseth, that if they be coupled longer than 9. or 10. hours, (which they *will* be and that sometimes for 24. hours together, if they be let alone) either female *will* receive very great hurt by it, or much seed *will* remain in her belly.

This once again brings out the extra emphasis laid, in the *Philosophical Transactions* on the physical world, which is not the case in the *Journal des Sçavans*, where the moral sphere has a small but significant part to play.

9. Concluding remarks

Language is a human phenomenon; it derives from a context, and knowledge of that context is necessary for the full understanding of the language produced. In the case studied here, we see that the editorial choices which lie behind the language of the texts are the product of, and indeed are part and parcel of the historical context which produces them. In France, the fact that his mentor, Colbert, wanted to control the new forms of knowledge that were emerging to avoid their being used to challenge the state, led Denis de Sallo to produce a journal of book reviews covering the whole field of human knowledge. This decision is consistent with the objective of state control, since the main way in which new knowledge had been established until then was in book form; and if one is in the business of state control, it is necessary to control everything, hence the decision to cover all fields of new knowledge. In Henry Oldenburg's case his objective was the pragmatic one of supplementing his income, hence profitability was of prime importance for him. He had at his disposal his extensive correspondence, devoted to the area of 'natural philosophy', and secondarily the papers read at the Royal Society. Networks of correspondence, like that centred on Oldenburg, were not uncommon at the time, and were a method of disseminating new ideas and information (Gotti 2006). His potential public was the membership of the Royal Society and other like-minded people. Given this situation, the choice of a newsletter based on his correspondence and restricted to questions of 'natural philosophy' seems natural, and totally coherent. We then see that these decisions are reflected in the specific linguistic features which appear in the texts published. In the case of process types the distinguishing feature of the *Journal des*

Sçavans is the presence of verbal processes, indicating communication, that of the writers of the books reviewed and that of the reviewer expressing his opinions. In the *Philosophical Transactions* the distinguishing process type is that of material process, reflecting an interest in physical experiment, and observation of physical phenomena. In the case of the themes used, the *Journal des Sçavans* is distinguished by themes relating to other texts, and other humans, notably the books under review and the authors of those books; the *Philosophical Transactions* is notable for the number of themes related to the object of study, again reflecting an interest in physical phenomena, and experimentation. In the case of modality, while not the most frequent, the presence of deontic modality in the *Journal des Sçavans* is significant, reflecting an interest in the whole sphere of new knowledge, including, in particular, matters of a religious nature. The *Philosophical Transactions* is distinguished by the use of dynamic modality, reflecting once more an interest in physical phenomena. Hence, the features studied all seem to be moving in the same direction, and to be the result of the editorial decisions taken by de Sallo and Oldenburg. So, we can say that the features studied – process type, semantic categories of theme, and modality – reflect the orientation of the *Journal des Sçavans* towards books and their authors, and the communication, argument and discussion in and about those books. In a similar way, in the *Philosophical Transactions*, the same features reflect the focalization of this journal on the physical world, and on its description, observation, and experimentation. Thus these editorial choices are the link or fulcrum between the historical context and the language produced. Since this was the beginning of the academic article in French and English, these facts are of prime importance for the future development of academic writing.

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