

# Economics and EFL Learners

Faculty of Economics

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## Abstract

As English has come to be used more globally and native English speakers have struggled to understand economics, economists have increasingly become aware of the style of writing used in various economics texts. Studies of the type of English used in economics have focused on the rhetorical styles as well as on some grammatical usages. One area of focus has been the economics textbook. With the launching of the International Economics Department in the Faculty of Economics of Ritsumeikan University, English for an academic purpose has become a main focus in the new English curriculum. To better prepare students for such an academic endeavor, the text types and wordings used in economics must be better understood. As *Principles of Economics* by N. Gregory Mankiw published by Thomson was one textbook which was to be used, and as the most recent edition of the book could only be accessed on the Internet, Chapter 9 being the only sample version available, it was chosen for analysis of genre, information layout, language style, grammar, some vocabulary and recommendations. This choice was made because Chapter 9 provided differing text types within the chapter, one being normal textbook genre, another being newspaper article. The intent is to show some of the characteristic features of these text types which will help students better understand and cope with Economics readings.

## Introduction

In most universities throughout Japan, lectures in major fields of study, except for English classes, are in the mother tongue. However, as English has increasingly become more of a global language and universities attempt to help students become more competitive in the international community, English for academic purposes or special field purposes has become more important for some institutions and language classrooms. Immersing non-native speakers of English directly into a lecture in a specific field of study can be helpful if the student's English ability is relatively high and the student has some previous knowledge of that field of study. If a student is not well prepared in English for such a lecture, the material given in the lecture may become a waste of time for the student. Moreover, as students are not used to hearing lectures in English, nor are they familiar with the style of lecture given by native English lecturers and with the field of study, there are several barriers for the student to

overcome. Research in English for Specific Purposes/English for Academic Purposes (ESP/EAP) as well as teaching methodology and materials for ESP/EAP attempt to accomplish two things: (1) analyze and determine goals for students to clear; and (2) prepare steps which students can take to help them listen to lectures or read and write for an English class in a major field of study by examining the patterns of language used in that field.

Ritsumeikan University's Faculty of Economics is one example of a university which requires some students to take Economics in English. The Faculty of Economics at Ritsumeikan University began preparations for a reformation of their curriculum 2 years ago with plans for the actual courses organized one year ago. The catalysts for this reformation were the launching of the International Economics Department and further opportunities for studying abroad. Thus, a research group was established to prepare for this curriculum with a Mombusho Research Grant C number 18520464. One of the main goals of this new curriculum is to provide more opportunities for students to be able to study Economics through English. In order for students to take lectures in English, the English program will need to provide students with the opportunities to enhance their skills in academic English. Students begin the first year with general English courses in reading, communication and writing, listening and using computers to assist learning. In the second year, these students continue to take English reading and communication and writing courses and then begin to take Economics courses in English. In order to better equip students for academic studies in English, the second year reading, communication, and writing courses need to provide materials and exercises which can help and complement the Economics in English class. One initial step in preparing such a program is to assess types of materials that students must read and determine the rhetorical patterns which students will encounter.

Genre was an area that became a focus as ESP and EAP research has focused on it. In the ESP research, genre is considered to be a pattern of text which is negotiated by people within a specific field (Swales 1990). Genre, such as textbook, research article, or review article has been examined in terms of the text organizations, functions of certain patterns and the language used. One genre of writing that students will encounter the most is the textbook. Textbooks in English are generally very similar in layout; however, depending on the discipline, there may be some differences. As *Principles of Economics* by N. Gregory Mankiw published by Thomson was one textbook which was to be used in the International Economics Department Economics in English course, parts of this textbook were analyzed to ascertain how students can prepare and read for a course using this textbook. Information on the most recent edition (2007 fourth edition) of the book could be accessed on the Internet. As Chapter 9 was the only sample version for the fourth edition provided on the Internet, it was chosen for an analysis of genre, information layout, language, grammar, some vocabulary and recommendations. (References to other chapters in the book are from the *third edition* as the *fourth edition* is not available.) Before the analysis is presented, a brief literature review is provided below for the rationale.

## Research in Economics English

Research into English used by economists is not a new topic. In the early 1980s, economists began discussion among themselves about their communication methods and their own discourse. Economists have looked at their discourse in terms of rhetoric and others have looked at their discourse from an ESP genre point of view. One such economist is McCloskey, a major figure in economic rhetoric. He stated (1998) that economists did not express their notions as they do their economics and also proposed a change in methodology. He felt that the unofficial economic rhetoric follows a more implicit style, while officially the discourse is explicit. If rhetoric in economics were examined more thoroughly by economists, the quality of their arguments would be qualitatively better according to McCloskey. Another economist who has published on economics discourse is Henderson. Henderson in fact has also published with applied linguists, such as Hewings. Together they have examined economic discourse by examining genre and specific language in the genre. In addition, Pholsward and Allen (1988), Mason (1990), and Royce (1995) and many others are some of the people who have done research in English of economics, history of economic thought and mathematical discourse. For the purposes of this paper, two research articles examining economics for certain characteristic features will be briefly summarized as a review.

Henderson and Hewings (1987) give a very insightful explanation about reading economics texts by focusing primarily on terminology. After observing some economics classes and interviewing some students, they found that terminology was most difficult for the students. They did an analysis of three texts on the same topic from three different textbooks. When asking adult students (not specifically non-native) about their understanding of texts, understanding of texts themselves was not much of a problem as was how to use the terminology. The terminology of economics was important to many lecturers as some assessment was based on students' use of terminology. This was to show that students understood the concepts. When students were unable to express themselves with the appropriate terminology, the lecturer determined that the student was not comprehending the content. In addition, Henderson and Hewings observed that lecturers were not always going through the economics textbook in a linear manner; that is, they often skipped around in the book whereby students would miss definition of terms. As a textbook is written so that terms are defined in one chapter and reused in a subsequent chapter, the definition of terminology becomes important for students. Thus, examining terminology of textbooks and the definition of those terms were the focus of this research. In the research, texts were examined to find definition or familiarization of terminology. The familiarization was given not only in the first part of the texts but also in the middle; that is, to help non-economist readers, the authors include familiarization of terms a great deal. Exemplification, explanation and definition of terms were the most prominent methods of familiarization for new terminology used in the texts, and it was found that these results followed the findings from Bromki and Williams in 1984. However, in more advanced

texts, familiarization of terms is not provided as readers are expected to know the terms. Thus, familiarization will occur less. Henderson and Hewings recommend that adult readers read through the textbook or texts and highlight familiarizations of terms to have a better understanding of the purpose and audience of the reading. Thus, readers can see what kind of reading they are encountering and take measures to become familiar with terms they do not know, such as finding the definition of terms through the index and in the glossary of the book.

Further, Hewings and Henderson (1987) focus on genre and schema. For helping students to read two textbooks and journal articles, the authors discuss the two genre and steps taken to help adult students (presumably native speakers) read these materials. In this research, some interesting observations were made by the researcher. The genre of the textbook is already familiar to the students as they have read textbooks in high school and thus, the schema is already present in the mind. One problem which students encountered with the two textbooks was that the two textbooks were to be complementing each other and not to be substitutes, which is what students were thinking. Thus, the students' ideas for the purposes of textbooks were not clear to students.

One textbook was a regular introductory textbook for economics focusing on the definition of terms and explanation of economic theory, whereas the second was for applied economics and gave more concrete examples of economic principles. An interesting point was also made about students concerning the textbooks and the lecturer's intentions. Students favored reading the second textbook for applied economics and ignored the first. However, the lecturer expected students to be able to discuss the basic concepts and not the examples themselves. The students were unable to do this. In order to help students understand the concepts better, the students were asked to: (1) look more carefully at the subject-specific vocabulary and definitions; (2) skim the text to get a general understanding; (3) read the headings to provide clues in order to be able to read more effectively.

For bank review articles in the journals, students faced problems because they were reading and discussing the articles as if they were introductory textbooks. As students had not encountered journal articles and particularly bank reviews, the genre was not familiar; thus, there was no schemata in their minds. For the bank review articles, the students were given the macro-structure of the article: Situation-Policy-Result-Theory-Conclusion. Students were already familiar with the article, presumably having read through the article previously using other methods to try and understand the article. Thus, the authors recommended that from the beginning before reading the article in detail, students should look or survey for the pattern of the text and take notes on the five sections. As a result, students were able to discuss the article in a cohesive framework. They did not focus on the details of the article as if it were an introductory textbook. Looking at the macro-structure of the articles helped students a great deal more in understanding. Students were able to discuss the articles with the idea about the purpose of the article.

More articles have been written on economic writing; however, few address problems with non-English speaking students reading English texts. Further articles focusing on education of

economics, as well as the two articles above, have recommended that when reading textbooks, students should focus on the terminology used to be able to apply the terms in discussion and skim the chapters in order to get a better idea of content and concepts to be read. If these strategies are recommended for native speakers, such strategies might help non-native speakers even more. In addition, as students do not have the schema or images of English textbook patterns in their minds, having students understand the genre will become important. Terminology will be difficult for students; however, other features in a textbook will probably be difficult for non-native speakers of English, too. Thus, an analysis of one chapter from Mankiw becomes a helpful beginning for the English program in the Faculty of Economics at Ritsumeikan.

### Analysis of the Book

Chapter 9 of Mankiw's book consists of 23 pages. The length and structure of this chapter is representative of all of the chapters in the book. Chapter 9 is rather unique compared to some of the other chapters in the book as it is entitled an applications chapter. Chapter 8 is the only other applications chapter in the book. A major characteristic about Chapter 9 is that it revolves entirely around one hypothetical situation: the steel trade in the fictitious town of Isoland. As this is an applications chapter, having one case study *per se* would be fitting. (In addition, this chapter does contain a separate case study section at the end.) This situation is simplified in order for students to understand the explanation of concepts easily, for the author states, "The single most important purpose of this book is to help you learn the economist's way of thinking" (p.19) and also, "know from experience that making simplifying assumptions is a key part of building a useful economic model (p.180). Although Chapter 9 is the only chapter which is about one hypothetical situation, example situations, fictitious or real life, are used when illustrating certain concepts throughout the book. To facilitate understanding, the analysis is divided into six sections: (1) Recognizing the overall organization of the book; (2) Definition of terms; (3) Complexity of sentences; (4) Figures and mathematical expressions; (5) Hypothetical situations; (6) Aspects of the passages to help students.

#### (1) Recognizing the overall organization of the book

The language and the organization of the textbook are quite simple compared to more advanced economics readings and are aimed at helping the students comprehend basic principles of economics in an understandable way. As textbooks in other countries may not necessarily follow the same layout as an American textbook, going over the organization of a textbook in English might be beneficial for students. Each chapter contains an easily recognizable organization as sections are clearly marked with headings. One feature of an economics textbook is the figures which are clearly labeled along with having an explanation. (Figures may not always be a feature of textbooks in other disciplines.) New terminologies are in bold print within the text as well as having the term printed in the margin with the definition

and providing a section at the end of the chapter of Key Concepts. Having key concepts in bold print is characteristic of a textbook genre. Quick Quizzes follow certain sections for students to review concepts which were covered. Quizzes or questions for a review of a chapter are also features of a textbook. A conclusion is provided, followed by a summary of the main points, key concepts, questions for review, and problems and applications.

The information in a chapter of a textbook often follows an essay organization. The chapter begins with an Introduction, then the Body and ends with a Conclusion. There is a tendency for information to be organized in a general to specific pattern. A characteristic feature of this type of organization is having a theme statement or purpose of the chapter in the introduction towards the end of the last paragraph. For chapter 9, the last paragraph in the introductory section ends with a thesis statement which clearly conveys the author's intentions for the chapter: "With these tools, we can learn more about how international trade affects economic well-being" (p.177). Another feature is the tendency for paragraphs throughout the textbook to have a topic sentence or main idea as a first sentence thereby helping students understand the main point of each paragraph or short section. For example, the second paragraph of "The World Price and Comparative Advantage" sub-section has a clear topic sentence stating the author's intentions of a comparison: "To answer this question, the economists compare the current Isolandian price of steel to the price of steel in other countries" (p.179). These sentences stating the purpose or topic take the reader from general ideas to more specific ideas.

Sections are a prominent feature of textbooks. Reading the headings of a textbook can help students understand the general content of each section. For example, Chapter 9 has the following headings:

#### Determinants of Trade

##### The Winners and Losers from Trade

##### The Arguments for Restricting Trade

It also has subheadings, such as, "Equilibrium of Trade", "The World Price and Comparative Advantage," and "The Gains and Losses of an Exporting Country." Furthermore for major sections, there is an introductory paragraph, body paragraph(s) and concluding paragraph. Even with a section beginning with only one paragraph, the first sentence and concluding sentence in the one paragraph help students' understanding. For example, in "Determinants of Trade", the first sentence "Consider the market for steel" gives the reader an idea of the topic. The final sentence of the first paragraph, "We examine here the steel market in the imaginary country of Isoland" (p.178) is the thesis statement for the entire section. Thus, by reading these sentences, the reader has a clear idea of what will generally be discussed in the section.

For sub-sections like "The World Price and Comparative Advantage", there is a unity within the section. The first paragraph is an introduction and begins with the topic sentence, "The first issue our economists take up is whether Isoland is likely to become a steel impor-

ter or a steel exporter" (p.179). The last sentence is "In other words, if free trade is allowed, will Isolandians end up buying or selling steel in world markets?" (p.179) which is a restatement of the first sentence. The first and last sentences mark out the general topic or ideas which will be covered in a section and even a paragraph. This is a feature of a textbook and Mankiw's book does not seem to be an exception. Understanding these points should help students comprehend the book and read faster.

As was stated previously, some additional information is placed as separate sections on some pages throughout the chapter and textbook. Such passages are visually separated by different colors or by being enclosed in a box. These extra readings, called "In the New" and "FYI" in Mankiw, can have thesis statements going from general to specific as in essay organization, but others might be written as newspaper articles which can have differing organizations.

In Chapter 9, several passages are scattered in the chapter to provide real life examples illustrating the principles or concepts being discussed in a section. One example of "In the News" is "Live Cheap Clothes from China" (p.183) which is a news article from The New York Times. This is a review of what has been occurring between the US and China and giving some predictions of what China probably will do. As this is a news report article, the important information is provided at the beginning with non-important details provided towards the end. Thus, the main facts about imports from China to the US are in the first two paragraphs. Further details of the trade figures are followed by comments from authorities. Explaining or showing this differing organization and purpose of the reading might help students in their reading and understanding of a textbook.

Another additional passage is provided later as "FYI. Import Quotas: Another Way to Restrict Trade" (p.186). This section is giving additional information about restricting international trade. It is not directly related to the points in the main reading, but it provides further discussion about the related topic of import quotas and tariffs. The organization in this passage has an introduction, body and conclusion. A topic sentence is the first sentence of each of the paragraphs. A conclusion of that section is provided in the last paragraph.

"FYI. Other Benefits of International Trade", a third separate passage, has a slightly different organization than the other FYI sections. The purpose of this passage is written in the last sentence of the first paragraph and the benefits are then pointed out with bullets. Then, the last paragraph is a conclusion. These points provide inferences that economists would make and provide help in understanding economists' conclusions and recommendations presented in this section of the main text. Having the benefits written with bullets helps students visually see some of the important content set off from the rest of the text.

As seen with some of the separated sections just discussed, certain information is visually separated on the page by differing colors or setting off information within a box. Within the main texts, some important points are visually shown to be separate as well. For instance, in the section, "Equilibrium of Trade" the problems to be discussed are posed as questions on page 179 which are easily recognizable and set off with bullets:

- If the government allows Isolandians to import and export steel, what will happen to the price of steel and the quantity of steel sold in the domestic steel market?
- Who will gain from free trade in steel and who will lose, and will the gains exceed the losses?
- Should a tariff (a tax on steel imports) be part of the new trade policy? (p.179)

Anything in bullets will be important as they are important questions or points or summaries of points discussed. Thus, students when skimming the text might read information set off visually with bullets.

Understanding the overall organization of information in a textbook chapter will be helpful when skimming through the textbook or chapter. This organization of information in a textbook is a major aspect that students can learn for any special subject. However, several characteristic features of an economics textbook can be learned as well.

## (2) Definition of terms

One major feature of a textbook is the terminology that students must learn. However, as discussed in Henderson and Hewings (1987), students found difficulties in using the economic terminology. Thus, non-native speakers of English might have further problems with economic terminology as well as understanding the definition of economic terms. Chapter 9 as well as other chapters in Mankiw's book seem to be built on previous chapters. In other words, the terms, definitions, and concepts from previous chapters are reused and become stepping stones for the subsequent chapters (as discussed in Hewings and Henderson, 1987).

The important economic terms which are mentioned the first time are in bold print within the text. To visually signal important terminology and definitions, the term in blue, bold print and definition in black, regular print are written in the margins of the page. For *world price* (p.179), the definition given in the margin is "the price of a good that prevails in the world market for that good". In the text, it is written "We call the price prevailing in world markets the world price." Both definitions are similar; however, to help with understanding, an exemplification is provided in the text before the definition, "the economists compare the current Isolandian price of steel to the price of steel in other countries". An explanation of the term follows that definition: "If the world price of steel is higher than the domestic price, then Isoland will export steel once trade is permitted." These lexical familiarization categories follow those discussed in Henderson and Hewings (1987) and Bramki and Williams (1984).

Important words are also in italic print. However, for this textbook, the italicized terms are not repeated in the margin. Thus, students would need to examine the text more carefully to find these terms. For example, an important word italicized is *price takers* (p.180). The explanation is given first, "If Isoland is a small economy, then the change in Isoland's trade policy will not affect the world price of steel. The Isolandians are said to be *price takers* in the world economy," and then defined, "that is, they take the world price of steel as given." Recognizing the differing print or font used to set off important terminology will be important for students to find the terms.



For students to better understand the terminology of economics, students must become familiar with the exemplification, explanation and definition of economic terminology as well as any other methods of lexical familiarization used in textbooks. To enable students to become prepared for economic terms when reading a textbook, it is helpful for them to read through the terms and definitions when skimming. By reading the economic terms and definitions when skimming, they will have an opportunity to better comprehend the terms and definitions when reading the chapter carefully for details.

### (3) Complexity of sentences

Another major feature of college level textbooks, and later of more advanced readings, is complex sentence constructions which may present a problem. Nominal phrases, dependent clauses (embedded clauses), and conditionals will be more prominent. For non-native English speaking students, these constructions may be a challenge. Mankiw's book does have some complex sentence constructions. Thus, in addition to words, sentence complexity might be a feature to focus on.

Longer sentences can be found throughout Chapter 9, particularly in the explanations: for example, "In essence, comparing the world price and the domestic price before trade indicates whether Isoland has a comparative advantage in producing steel." "Comparing the world price and the domestic price before trade" is a nominal phrase in the subject position, "indicates" is the verb and "whether Isoland has a comparative advantage in producing steel" is a dependent clause. Having a longer sentence "Isoland has a comparative advantage in producing steel" embedded in the dependent clause might be difficult for students to comprehend.

Conditionals are often used to give examples, but as this pattern is often in complex sentences, there may be difficulties in understanding. An example is the following: "If the domestic price is low, the cost of producing steel in Isoland is low, suggesting that Isoland has a comparative advantage in producing steel relative to the rest of the world." "If the domestic price is low" is the condition. The nominal phrase, "the cost of producing steel in Isoland," is in the subject position. The main verb of the main sentence is "is" with "low" in the complement position. The second part of the conditional begins with "suggesting that" which projects another sentence, "Isoland has a comparative advantage in producing steel relative to the rest of the world." In the second sentence, "Isoland" is in the subject position followed by the main verb "has". The next portion "a comparative advantage in producing steel" is a nominal phrase followed by a modifying clause "relative to the rest of the world". Dividing the sentence for students and explaining the meanings may become necessary in conjunction with an explanation of the content for the reading passage to assist comprehension.

### (4) Figures and mathematical expressions

Another aspect of complex sentences can be found in relation to the explanation of figures and calculations. Within the text, the economic principles or ideas are stated and figures are introduced in separate colored sections. Figures seem to be a prominent feature of an econo-

mics textbook. Students will have to read differing types of graphs, recognize the legend of the figure, and the explanation of the figure. Thus, early in the textbook, an Appendix follows Chapter 2 to help students read and understand different types of graphs and figures. However, in conjunction with recognizing graphs and being able to interpret information from graphs, students have to understand the language used to explain these graphs.

Reference to a figure can simply be stated: “As Figure 1 shows,” “This figure shows the consumer”. In the text, Figure 1 is introduced with “The figure shows the consumer and producer surplus in the equilibrium without trade” (p.178). Under the legend of the figure, “The Equilibrium without International Trade”, the figure is explained with the following:

When an economy cannot trade in world markets, the price adjusts to balance domestic supply and demand. This figure shows consumer and producer surplus in an equilibrium without international trade for the steel market in the imaginary country of Isoland (p.178)

The explanation of the figure in the text is a rather difficult construction. “The figure” is a noun in the subject position followed by the main verb “shows”. A nominal phrase, “the consumer and producer surplus in the equilibrium without trade,” follows. This complex sentence may prove to be difficult for some students. In addition, the explanation found underneath the legend also is a similar complex sentence, not to mention the interpretation and the ability to equate the situation described with the visual mode of the figure; that is, the students must equate “consumer and producer surplus in equilibrium” with the appropriate areas in the figure and comprehend the relationships of those areas. Such an ability is separate from only English comprehension.

In the section “Gains and Losses in Exporting Countries,” for the explanation of the figure, nominal phrases might be difficult. For example, the sentence “The supply curve shows the quantity of steel produced domestically and the demand curve shows the quantity consumed domestically” has a couple of difficult nominal phrases together. The first phrase is “the quantity of steel produced domestically” and the second is “the quantity consumed domestically.” Unpacking the meaning for each of these nominal phrases may take time for students. In addition in the text, an explanation of Figure 2 reads, “One can view the horizontal line at the world price as representing the demand for steel from the rest of the world.” The nominal phrases “the horizontal line at the world price” and “the demand for steel from the rest of the world” are quite long and would be difficult for students to comprehend. Having students read these explanations in the text and under the legends when skimming the chapter might help students be prepared when reading the chapter in detail. In addition, these explanations may have to be explained.

Another of the problems that students might encounter will be the presentation of mathematical terminology and concepts in English. For instance, in referring to Figure 1, the following sentence appears: “The domestic price adjusts to balance the quantity supplied by domestic sellers and the quantity demanded by domestic buyers” (p.178). Within this sentence, students have to understand several terms. They would have to understand words like

“adjusts”, “to balance” as a verb, and also a complex nominal like “the quality supplied by domestic sellers.” Also referring to Figure 1, the following explanation is written: “The figure shows the consumer and producer surplus in the equilibrium without trade. The sum of consumer and producer surplus measures the total benefits that buyers and sellers receive from the steel market” (p.178). Students must understand several terms as well, such as, “equilibrium” (which is defined in Chapter 4), “the sum of” and “measures” in addition to the complex sentences.

In the section “Gains and Losses in Exporting Countries,” for the explanation of Figure 2, the mathematical expressions might be difficult:

- a. “Once trade is allowed, the domestic price rises to equal the world price.”
- b. “Exports from Isoland equal the difference between the domestic quantity supplied and the domestic quantity demanded at the world price.”
- c. “Total surplus rises by an amount equal to area D, indicating that trade raises the economic well-being of the country as a whole” (p.180)

Words such as “rises”, “to equal”, “the difference between ~ and ~” might be difficult to understand. Other words in the third sentence like “an amount equal to” might be difficult.

The complex sentences and mathematical terminology might both present problems for some students. A major difficulty might also be equating both the explanations and mathematical calculations with what is illustrated in the figures. Reading figure legends and explanations underneath when skimming might help students be prepared for reading the chapter in detail. However, students may have to be taught the meanings of the mathematical expressions in conjunction with the meaning of the figures and the content of the chapter.

### (5) Hypothetical situations

Hypothetical situations which are explained in Mankiw’s book might prove to be difficult for some students to follow and is a feature that needs to be learned. Chapter 9 as a whole uses one hypothetical situation of Isoland making it very different from the other chapters. Other chapters use brief hypothetical situations often to explain certain concepts. Thus, students must understand that hypothetical situations are used frequently in economics textbooks. In addition, some situation that is introduced might be external to the text; that is, the situation might be based on cultural or societal information, habits or activities. This situation is presented to help the native-English-speaking student. Non-native English speaking students will have to become familiar with such references.

The introductory section of Chapter 9 begins with a situation that students can refer to in their own world. It begins, as it were, at the level of the students for attention getting. In some other chapters, topics familiar to the students as in this chapter or as in Chapter 2 or Chapter 22 are given. Chapter 2 begins by referring to different language used in differing disciplines. Chapter 22 begins by referring to Al Capone. In the case of Chapter 9, the attention getter is “If you check the labels on the clothes you are now wearing, you will

probably find that some of your clothes were made in another country.” This first sentence does not rely on previous information in the book, rather it relies on information external to the text which is easily accessible to the reader. The conditional is used with the future tense to get students to be thinking with the author about a hypothetical situation. Students are led to think about a specific situation that relates to the US: the importing of textiles from other countries and the consequences on US workers, factories and economy. This problem is then related to a more general concept of economic policy: the advantages and disadvantages that result from free trade and the consequences on the economy of that country. This introduction is organized a little like a narrative and resembles an anecdote to get the students’ attention.

The main narrative of Isoland which is the main hypothetical situation for the chapter begins in the section, the “Equilibrium of Trade.” The first paragraph introduces the hypothetical world and the situation is presented like a narrative, thus, there are no topic sentences. Transition phrases are used to lead students through the story: “A century ago,” “Today”, “As our story begins”, “By government decree”.

In the subsection “The Effects of a Tariff” a letter is written out (p.186-187). As the author is writing a narrative at times, it is not surprising to incorporate the genre of letter. The letter in this section is presented by the economists of Isoland to the president. The organization of information in the letter may not be normal, as it acts as a summary for the content presented in the previous sections. However, questions are clearly written out along with the answers. Thus, the organization of information in the letter is not difficult. Being able to recognize this general letter organization or genre will help some students and not take them by surprise when encountered in a textbook.

Recognizing that some passages in a textbook are not necessarily organized by important points like topic sentence will be helpful for students. They need to be recognizing that a narrative will often be giving hypothetical situations. At times, a letter might appear as part of the narrative. Although not in Chapter 9, short hypothetical situations may also be stated as examples. Recognizing different organizations and language to introduce hypothetical situations might help students understand an economics textbook.

#### (6) Aspects of the passages to help students

The information that has been presented has been primarily features which might present challenges for students. However, some features are in the textbook which are very helpful. Informal language is a main feature of Chapter 9 and the textbook. This is seen by the many questions in the text to get students to think. At times, the text (author) directly addresses the readers by using “you”. The first sentence of Chapter 9 is the following: “If you check the labels on the clothes you are now wearing, you will probably find that some of your clothes were made in another country” (p.177). This type of writing should help the students’ understanding. Students in their own writing tend to write as if speaking directly to the reader. Thus, this style will be familiar to students. In addition, the author refers back to previous chapters quite often. For example, in the Introduction of Chapter 9, the author

refers to Chapter 3 in which comparative advantage was discussed: "Chapter 3 introduced the study of international trade by applying the principles of comparative advantage" (p. 177). Repetition is needed for students to digest the content; thus, this feature is most helpful. Such various features should be very helpful for students in understanding Mankiw's textbook and indeed many other textbooks.

## Conclusion

In general, Mankiw's chapter 9 seems to follow a clear textbook format and vocabulary is not terribly difficult. The chapter begins with general knowledge and then brings a specific economic concept, international trade in this case, that is to be studied. Each section then discusses specific aspects about the economic concept. As is often recommended in reading textbooks, students would be able to understand the gist of the chapter by reading the introduction to the chapter, introduction to each section, the first and last sentences of body paragraphs, conclusions to each section, and the conclusion to the chapter. In addition, they should read the headings, and subheadings, definitions of words in the text and in the margins, as well as legends and explanations of figures. Thus, if students are able to focus on certain sections of the reading, they should be able to have a general understanding of the chapter. However, when trying to get details of the content, some of the economic vocabulary, mathematical terms and complex sentences will present some problems for students to understand the essential concepts, economic calculations, and applications of certain concepts. Possibly, by focusing on such features of vocabulary definitions and usage, mathematical expressions, complex sentences, and hypothetical situations, students might be better able to understand this economics textbook.

Only a brief analysis of this textbook could be provided. Mankiw has successfully tried to focus on essential economic concepts and given many examples throughout the chapter. By intertwining further explanations and strategies to assist mainly with the challenging features of this textbook, students should be able to understand the content. It is recommended that exercises focusing on the features of the textbook be prepared for English classes to assist with the Economics in English course.

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