

# Genre Analysis in the Translation Studies Paradigm Today

## *El análisis de género en la traductología contemporánea*

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**Abstract:** Genre represents a form of social interaction between writers/translators and readers/target text receivers, as readers, when exposed to a text belonging to a particular genre, anticipate a specific textual structure (cf. Mukařovský's apperception frame or Swales' genre knowledge). Genre is also seen as a dynamic category which may result in hybrid, mixed or embedded forms as well as altogether new ones. Despite the fact that genre analysis has enjoyed immense popularity within the last two decades across Europe, it has been overshadowed by functional stylistics, rooted in the structuralist notion of function, in the Czechoslovak stylistic tradition. The aim of this paper is thus threefold: 1) to map the development of the Czechoslovak stylistic tradition in contrast to the western tradition and comprehensively delimit terms such as genre, register and functional style; 2) to discuss the role of genre theory in the translation studies paradigm today; 3) to propose the implementation of genre analysis as a part of translation strategy since genre-consciousness or knowledge can be a powerful facilitator of the translation process.

**Key words:** genre; register; functional style; genre analysis; translation.

**Resumen:** El género textual constituye un modo de interacción social entre los autores/traductores y los lectores/recipientes de los textos meta; por eso, cuando los lectores están expuestos a un texto de un género dado, anticipan una estructura textual específica (cf. el marco de apercepción de Mukařovský o el conocimiento de género de Swales). A la vez, el género constituye una categoría dinámica que puede producir tanto formas híbridas, mixtas o incrustadas como formas nuevas. A pesar de que el análisis de género ha sido muy popular en Europa en las últimas dos décadas, en la tradición estilística checa, que parte del concepto estructuralista de la función, el concepto de género ha sido superado por la estilística funcional. Por lo tanto, este artículo tiene tres objetivos: 1) explorar el desarrollo de la tradición estilística checoslovaca en comparación con la tradición occidental y presentar una definición completa de los siguientes conceptos: el género, el registro y el estilo funcional; 2) elaborar sobre el papel de la teoría de género en la traductología contemporánea; 3) proponer el análisis de género como parte de la estrategia de traducción dado que la consciencia o conocimiento de género puede ser una herramienta muy instrumental en el proceso de traducción.

**Palabras clave:** género; registro; estilo funcional; análisis de género; traducción.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the present paper, I will discuss the position of genre theory in the translation studies paradigm today against the backdrop of traditional conceptions, primarily with respect to the long and distinguished Czechoslovak stylistic tradition. Genre represents one of the key terms in literature as well as in translation and language studies. Its meaning has evolved significantly over the decades and differs depending on the theoretical framework in which it is used (Biel 2018).

The interest in the notion of genre as a classification tool from the literary and artistic domains to the non-literary sphere for analytical as well as pedagogical purposes paved the way for fast-growing scholarly activity in genre theory, which accounted for the immensely complex and diversified body of research in the second half of the twentieth century. The point of departure, regardless of the theoretical orientation, was the awareness of the inherently generic nature of language utterances, or the fact that in all of our utterances – «[e]ven in the most free, the most unconstrained conversation, we cast our speech in definite generic forms» (cf. Bakhtin 1986, 80)<sup>1</sup>. In this respect, each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances.

1. This view was also supported by Jacques Derrida who suggested «a text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without... a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genre-less text» (Derrida 1981, 61).

Despite the fact that genre analysis has enjoyed immense popularity over the last two or three decades across Europe, in the Czechoslovak stylistic (but also translation) tradition it has been “overshadowed” by functional stylistics, rooted in the structuralist notion of function. Although terms such as *genre* and *register* do exist in the Czechoslovak tradition, they have been used only marginally. Moreover, their meanings do not fully overlap with their usage in the Anglophonic tradition. In the same vein, the significance of the term *style*, or *functional style*, in the Czechoslovak tradition, is not interchangeable with either *register*, or with what is usually referred to as *style* in the Anglophonic tradition (Urbanová 2008). In addition, the theory of functional styles is not even known in the Anglophonic world.

Concerning the terms *register* and *genre* in the Anglophonic environment, the situation is not less complicated, as there is no general consensus regarding their use (cf. Biber and Conrad 2009). Both terms have been used to refer to varieties connected with particular situations of use and particular communicative purposes. Many studies simply adopt one of these terms and disregard the other. For example, Biber (1988), Bhatia (2002) and Swales (1990; 2004) exclusively use the term *genre*. Other studies, for example, Furguson (1983), Conrad (2001) and Biber et al. (1999) prefer to use the term *register*. Additional researchers have used both the terms *register* and *genre*, making a theoretical distinction between them.

Since my approach to the present study is interdisciplinary, drawing inspiration from more theoretical approaches, including the tradition of the Prague School and the Czechoslovak stylistic traditions, it is worthwhile to map out the field and touch upon the issue from a wider perspective.

The aim of this paper is thus threefold:

- 1) to map out the development of Czechoslovak stylistics in contrast to the western tradition and comprehensively delimit terms such as *genre*, *register* and *functional style*;
- 2) to discuss the role of genre theory in the translation studies paradigm;
- 3) to propose the implementation of genre analysis as a part of translation strategy since genre-consciousness or knowledge can be a powerful facilitator of the translation process.

A common point of departure lies in the notion of function, as similarities in the conception of style can be found in the Prague School, in the functionalism of Halliday (1994), as well as in Crystal and Davy (1969), the founders of British linguistic stylistics.

## 2. THE CZECHOSLOVAK STYLISTIC TRADITION AND THE NOTION OF STYLE

The Czech and closely related Slovak stylistics, rooted in Prague structuralism, from its very beginning have been formed as *selective*<sup>3/4</sup>each style is formed by a choice of linguistic possibilities; and *functionalist*<sup>3/4</sup>the strongest influence in shaping the style (during the selection of linguistic possibilities) is represented by the function of the text (cf. Mareš 2013). Functional stylistics thus deals with a variety of contexts in order to explain the selection of alternatives used in a particular context as opposed to a different one. As a result, «the norms (“rules”) of functional stylistics are not “context-free”, universally valid prescriptions, but rather “context-bound” tendencies, expressing distributions of selective preferences» (Doležel and Kraus, 1972, 37).

The beginnings of Czechoslovak functional stylistics date back to the establishment of the Prague Linguistic Circle in 1926 and the presentation of Theses in 1929 by renowned figures such as Vilém Mathesius, Roman Jakobson, Nikolaj Sergejevič Trubeckoj, Jan Mukařovský, Bohumil Trnka, Josef Zubatý and Bohuslav Havránek, to name but a few<sup>2</sup>. For them, language was a system of purposeful means which was more adequate, the better the means were suited to their purposes. Moreover, unlike the Neogrammarian school, whose followers believed that the only scientific method of linguistic research was the historical approach, the Prague linguists came to recognize that besides the diachronic approach there was equally scientific justification for a non-historical, synchronic approach, investigating a given language at a given time regardless of its previous stages. Mathesius (1983, 122) explains that «only an analysis of the entire complex of language phenomena existing simultaneously at a particular time enables one to grasp their synchronic interdependence which links them into the language system». The most important aspects of the movement are summarized, for example, in Vachek (1976, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c) and Mathesius (1983).

Without any doubt, the Prague scholars of the 1920s and 1930s constituted the first blueprint of complete systemic research into all language levels. First of all, they were of the view that what shapes the language system are the functions it has to perform. The notion of function was seen as a fundamental principle of language, which, however, goes beyond mere *use of language*, since it is closely related to the evolution of human language. Nevertheless, the most significant contribution of

2. The Prague School became one of the most important linguistic and literary movements of the early twentieth century. Their influence spread only gradually, especially through the work of Roman Jakobson, who at the outbreak of the Second World War emigrated to the United States, and through the translations of their work into English in the early 1960s (cf. Vachek 1964). Prague linguists contributed to the study of phonetics, phonology and semantics. An interesting study about the cultural isolation of the Prague School and why its ideas were by-passed on the way to European post-structuralism is offered by Jettmarová (2008).

the Prague school to the Czechoslovak stylistic tradition consists in the introduction of the notion of *objective styles* and in a rather systematic classification of their varieties. It was assumed that some verbal properties of text classes can be derived from the supra-individual circumstances of the process of communication and that these «supra-individual communicative circumstances operate as style-forming factors, molding the verbal organization of texts in such a way as to make the expression adequate to the specific communicative needs» (Doležel and Kraus 1972, 36). Had speakers respected not these supra-individual norms, the produced message would not have been adjusted to the communicative circumstances and would have lost much of its desired effect. At the same time, scholars of the Prague school paid due attention to the «vagueness» of stylistic phenomena, describing the relationship of styles in their dynamism. «The dichotomy of the individual and the objective styles was interpreted as a dichotomy of extreme poles of a scale, with particular styles . . . being located at various points on the scale» (Doležel and Kraus 1972, 36). In other words, this dynamic approach took into account the fact that some texts prefer stereotyped ways of expression, lacking individual features (for example, legal documents, institutional forms, etc.), while poetic texts dominate in idiosyncratic individual features, lacking supra-individual style-forming factors. As a result, the former texts are placed close to the pole of objectivity, while the latter texts, in contrast, should be located close to the pole of individuality. A similar dynamism was essential for understanding the relationship between poetic and non-poetic, that is communicative styles (such as conversational, scientific, etc.). It follows that functional styles represent the most important category of the class of objective styles, being formed by the objective, supra-individual stylistic properties of texts which derive from the interplay of various goals, purpose and aims of communication.

In elaborating the concept of functional styles, Prague structuralists found strong inspiration in the theoretical framework of the work of Karl Bühler (1934), primarily in his *Organon model*, which he laid the foundations for the communication model of language. Bühler's three-function model comprises «Darstellungsfunktion» or the referential function; «Ausdrucksfunktion» or the emotive-expressive function; and «Appellfunktion» or the conative function. Bühler emphasized that these functions are not mutually exclusive (since they operate as a hierarchy), pointing out that any communication or speech event usually fulfils more than one function. In 1948, Mukařovský added the fourth, the aesthetic function, which was focused on the sign itself. Ten years later, Jakobson (1960) introduced a communication model, enlarging the number of language functions by two more – the metalingual and phatic functions, which, together with other functions (i.e. referential, emotive, poetic and conative) correspond to the factors involved in verbal communication: the addresser sends a message to the addressee, which requires a context (an extralinguistic world), a code comprehensible to

both the addresser and addressee, and a contact which involves a physical or psychological connection between the interlocutors. Gvoždiak (2014) assumes that Jakobson attempted to reconcile, or on the contrary, to obscure the dichotomy of *langue* and *parole*. This is also why, according to Derst-Andersen (2011, 148), Jakobson's functions represent «a combination of language and speech functions», while «Bühler's functions are language functions».

Both Jakobson and Mukařovský were of the view that a verbal message in the process of communication carries a dominating function, with other functions being in the background, although, not excluded from the communication. Moreover, the dominating function has a dynamic character, which means that one and the same text may acquire different (especially dominant) functions at different times and in different cultures (cf. Jettmarová 2008).

Another significant representative of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Bohuslav Havránek, drew inspiration from the classification of language functions when elaborating the well-known theory of functional styles, which for many years to follow entered into textbooks of stylistics. Having studied the functional differentiation of standard language, Havránek (1932) listed four functional languages, i.e. *conversational* (conversational) language, *professional* (factual) language, *scientific* language and *poetic* (literary) language. A style of language, according to Havránek (1932), is defined as «a system of co-ordinated and interrelated language means intended to fulfil a specific function» (1932; translation is mine). Since every utterance stems from a particular situation, Havránek emphasizes that it is impossible to evaluate separate words that have been separated from their functional role.

Havránek's concept of functional languages was adopted and further developed and influenced by Bečka (1938; 1948), Trávníček (1953), later Hausenblas (1955, 1972, 1973), Jelínek (1955, 1966, 1995), Havránek and Jedlička (1968), and Jedlička (1982). The classification of functional styles remained based, however, on Havránek and consists of the *matter-of-fact style*, *scientific*, *administrative*, *publicist* and *aesthetic styles*. This classification represents a relatively homogeneous theoretical framework which has been respected and referred to over the last almost fifty years. One of the reasons for such a time-honoured tradition, according to Schneiderová (2013), is the fact that these functional styles account for the fundamental human attitudes towards reality: practical, theoretical and aesthetic.

A new direction in contemporary Czech stylistics has been recently presented by Hoffmannová et. al. (2017). The authors introduce the notion of the *communicative sphere*, shifting the Czech view of style from the traditional functional stylistics approach (grounded in Prague structuralism) to a new perspective with a particular focus on dialogue, interaction, colloquiality and intertextuality (Macurová 2017). This does not mean, however, that the role of function has been abandoned. The function

(or functions) of texts represents only part of a complex of (style-forming) factors whose specific constellation underlies the characteristic aspect of style. In determining the spheres of communication, the authors begin by establishing the social spheres, which include, for example, the spheres of work, school everyday life and the like, «as sets of all verbal and non-verbal interactions or types of interactions characterized by social actors, their relationships, activities and aims. The communicative sphere, then, is a set of communicative situations or types of communicative situations connected through their realization in a certain social sphere» (Hoffmanová et. at. 2016, 496). From the description of the characteristic features of the communicative sphere, attention is turned to the description of the style of the texts in the given sphere. The style is understood in a traditional sense, as a set of regular and characteristic ways of selecting linguistic means and the way these means are organized. I am of the view that the notion of the communicative sphere, together with the emphasis on various communicative situations, in particular social contexts, brings the Czech stylistic tradition, albeit strongly rooted in its own tradition, closer to the genre tradition of the Anglophonic world.

Although Czechs and Slovaks were living side by side in Czechoslovakia, their approach to style seems to have diverged to some extent as the Slovaks took to literary poetics and in the 1960s to historical poetics (cf. Jettmarová 2008). The most important representatives of the Slovak stylistic tradition are Miko (1970) and Mistrík (1985). Of particular interest is the theory of expression introduced by Miko (1970), which laid the foundation for a systematic evaluation of the translation shifts that occur in a translation. In other words, Miko's expression-based theory provides a basis for the objective classification of differences between the translation and its original, as the shift of expression indicates directions from which and in which the values of expression move in the translation (cf. Popovič 1975).

The term style is not only limited to the Czechoslovak tradition. It has also been used in the British stylistic tradition. However, linguistic patterns related to styles have been associated more with aesthetic preferences and individual authors. Put simply, style has been most commonly associated with notions of «good» or «bad» writing (cf. Biber and Conrad 2009). Martin Joos (1962) is among those who use the term style and offers a very simple hierarchical analysis of English style according to levels of formality, both in spoken and written English. Joos (1962) speaks about a linear scale of formality, ranging from the *intimate*, *casual* and *consultative* style on one end of the spectrum to *formal* and *frozen* styles on the other end, suggesting that formality or «communicative carefulness» is assumed to dictate a speaker's stylistic choices. Newmark (1988), following Joos, also views language through the lenses of stylistic scales, suggesting *officialese*, *official*, *formal*, *neutral*, *informal*, *colloquial*, *slang* and *taboo* as different styles. Nevertheless, the basic notion in Anglophonic stylistics is that of register as a functional language variation instead of style.

### 3. THE NOTION OF REGISTER

The study of register came to the fore in the 1960s, particularly thanks to M.A.K. Halliday (1964, 1978) and his followers (Gregory and Carroll 1978). Similarly to the Prague School, Halliday (1978, 1994) views language as a socially and culturally grounded tool of communication, which simultaneously fulfils three metafunctions: the ideational metafunction, as language represents and reflects reality; the interpersonal metafunction, as language concerns but also shapes interpersonal as well as social relationships between participants in the discourse; and the textual metafunction, as language represents an organized and structured form, being able to build up sequences of discourse, organizing the discursive flow and creating cohesion and continuity—it provides texture. The interplay of the metafunctions or semantic components is reflected in the contextual categories of field, tenor and mode, the constellation of which results in a semantic variety termed register.

#### 3.1. *Contextual variables of field, tenor and mode*

Field as a contextual variable is concerned with the discourse patterns that realize the activity that is going on. Tenor deals with social relationships among discourse participants and the parameter of mode is concerned with channelling of communication, i.e. the discursive flow of information or texture as we move from one type of communication to another (for example, writing, speech, text message, email, video, etc.). Field, tenor and mode variables work alongside and only when operating together can they ensure the desired congruity of text and situation. Their mutual interplay imprints upon a text a consistent and expected pattern of linguistic features. Put differently, a shift in one variable may lead to a corresponding shift in another, which resonates with the conception of the open character of the system of language, postulated by the Prague school. Previous research has shown (Bhatia 2004; Hopkinson et al. 2009; Molnár and Zehnalová 2012) that in various registers one particular contextual parameter may dominate over the other two, resulting in field-dominated registers (e.g. scientific register), tenor-dominated registers (e.g. advertisements or other promotional texts) or mode-dominated registers (e.g. casual conversation).

In addition, it should not be forgotten that the language of discourse participants is also influenced by who the participants are, i.e. by their social class, provenance (for example, whether rural or urban), generation, age, sex, which is the basis of dialect, defined by Halliday (1968, 149) as «a variety of a language distinguished according to the user», as opposed to «a variety of a language distinguished according to use», that

is register<sup>3</sup>. In other words, user-related varieties comprise geographical, temporal, social standard as well as nonstandard dialects and idiolects, while registers comprise instead an open-ended set of varieties of language. «Language varies as its function varies; it differs in different situations» (Halliday 1968, 149). As a result, the notion of register «is needed when we want to account for what people do with their language» (ibid.). There is not any definite number of registers. Since they are determined by a particular communicative situation, they can be viewed as a continuum of variation (Biber and Conrad 2009; cf. also Mrázková 2014).

It should be emphasized that registers can be studied on many different levels of specificity. «There is no one correct level on which to identify a register» (Biber and Conrad 2009, 10). As a result, with the increasing level of specificity, both situational as well as linguistic features offer more precise and detailed results. It is up to the analyst to decide the level of generality for the analysis to be conducted. As pointed out by Mrázková (2014), this view is very close to the relationship between style-forming factors and functional styles delimited by the Prague school.

However, the concept of register is too broad a notion when it comes to differences between texts within a particular field or discipline, for example, the language of scientific reporting (and text categories such as a research article, academic textbook, academic essay, etc.), the register of which will undoubtedly go across the boundaries of the text categories. In other words, register analysis disregards differences between various text categories within a particular discipline and at this very moment the concept of genre comes into play<sup>4</sup>.

## 4. THE NOTION OF REGISTER

As stated above, within both linguistics and translation studies, only a few studies distinguished register from genre up until recently. Whereas register was viewed as a well-established and central concept in linguistics, genre was described «as a recent appendage found to be necessary as a result of important studies of text structure» (Swales 1990, 41). Currently, however, genre represents one of the key terms of both translation and language studies. The meaning of genre is, nevertheless, closely related to the theoretical framework in which it is used (Biel 2018).

3. Needless to say that every member of a society is a multi-register language user, with the familiarity with particular registers deriving from education, social status, occupation, etc. (cf. Ferenčík 2004).

4. As Bhatia (1993) explains a science research article is as legitimate an instance of scientific English as an extract from a chemistry lab report. Similarly, the legal register may comprise the language of the law in legal documents as well as the language of the courtroom and the language of communication between lawyers.

## 4.1. Main Traditions in Genre Theory

In the English-speaking world, three different scholarly traditions in genre analysis have been recognized, all originally deriving from applied linguistics, language teaching research and composition studies. They include the rhetorically oriented *North American tradition* (often associated with New Rhetoric), *the Australian tradition* (also sometimes referred to as «the Sidney school»), and *the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tradition* (Hyon 1996).

The New Rhetoric tradition, essentially rhetorical in approach and grounded in Speech Communication and Composition studies, focused more on the situational contexts in which genres occur than on their forms, and placed a special emphasis on the social purposes –*actions*– that these genres fulfil within these situations. Genre is viewed as being based on «typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations» (Miller 1984, 159). This definition emphasizes the character of genre as essentially rhetorical and construed around a situated action, and therefore essentially pragmatic in nature (Garzone 2015).

While the above-discussed New Rhetoric tradition primarily deals with composition studies and professional writing (both in the academic sphere as well as in professional settings), the other two approaches to be discussed here are more linguistically oriented and more interested in situational and contextual factors.

The Australian tradition in genre theory has been significantly influenced by the work of M. A. K. Halliday and his theoretical framework. On account of its essentially systemic-functional orientation, the concept of genre is used in combination with the notion of register, which is central to SFL (discussed above). The relationship between register and genre is viewed as two levels or strata of language in social contexts: register variables (*field*, *tenor* and *mode*) are coordinated in relation to social purpose by the higher level of genre, (Martin 2008, 2011). With genre occupying a hierarchically superordinate position, it enables interlocutors to identify individual stages in the process of text unfolding. This layer-like concept is strongly rooted in and reflects a stratal interpretation of the relation of language to social context realized as a series of mutually superimposing bottom-up evolving fields: *text-in-context* → *context-of-situation* → *context-of-culture* (cf. Zapletalová 2011, 18). Thus, each text in a context realizes patterns in a social situation and each situation realizes patterns in a culture, illustrated in Figure 1. As a result, register connects situation to language and genre links culture to situation, or, put differently, register contextualizes language and is in turn contextualized by genre (Martin and Rose 2008). This social semiotic model of language and context is summarized in Figure 2.

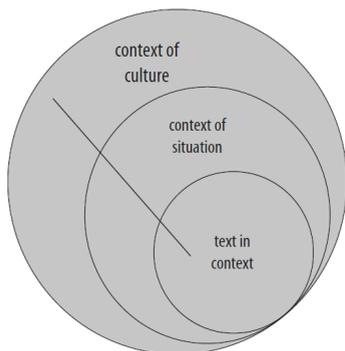


Figure 1: Strata of language in social contexts (Martin 2007, 10)

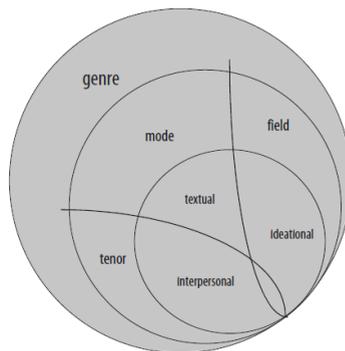


Figure 2: Language strata in relation to social context (stratified as register and genre), borrowed from Martin (2011, 103)

Based on what has been said above, Martin (1993, 142) defines genre as «a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture». This definition primarily emphasizes the relevance of purpose, highlighting the fact that its structure unfolds in stages or phases. As regards approach to genre, the four parameters discussed above, that is genre and register variables, enable the user to identify the semiotic frame in which a text is set.

The third tradition in genre theory is the ESP tradition, which views the notion of genre as a tool for analyzing and teaching the spoken and written language required of non-native speakers in academic and professional settings (Swales 1990, 2004; Bhatia 1993, 2008, 2010, 2017; Hyon 1996; Askheve and Nielsen 2004). Research of this tradition is ultimately language-oriented, but also includes sociolinguistic rhetorical and cognitive instruments, interpreting linguistic features in the light of social context and function (Garzone 2015).

Since there are quite a number of overlapping definitions of genre that have accumulated in literature since the ESP tradition began to proliferate, let me focus here on the most recurring features of genres as rhetorically situated texts, which have, in Bhatia's (1993) words, their "generic integrity": "consistency of communicative purposes" (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993), "conventionalized rhetorical settings" (Bhatia 1993), "dynamic complexity of communication" (Bhatia 2004), and last but not least, "social and contextual factors [are] involved" (Bax 2011).

Unlike the SFL tradition discussed above, where genre is realized through a sequence of "stages", through which the generic action unfolds, in the ESP tradition the cognitive structuring of genres is described in terms of "moves" of the different cognitive and rhetorical actions performed through discourse, which are often sequentially organized (Swales 1990). It is of utmost relevance to emphasize at this point that in addition to the identification of the move structure, two other levels of analysis are investigated with regard to the linguistic realization, that is, text-patterning and lexicogrammatical

features. Since research focusing on these two aspects aims at identifying the recurrence of linguistic features in connection with contextual and situational factors, it is often conducted on large corpora with corpus linguistics tools in order to go beyond impressionistic generalizations about the frequency of linguistic features (Tardy 2011; Bhatia 2017; Garzone 2015). It goes without saying that the analysis should go beyond a mere listing of recurrent features and provide an interpretation of their function in discourse in light of the communicative purpose accomplished by the relevant genre.

Similarly, to SFL, ESP also operates with the notion of register, primarily in the context of disciplinary variation or specificity, which is established based on the interaction of a register, discipline and genre: the discipline represents the content, whereas register stands for the language associated with it. Genres are then realized as the intersection of registers and disciplines, as illustrated in Figure 3 (borrowed from Bhatia 2004, 31). On the one hand, genres cut across disciplines (a research article as a genre will definitely display a number of shared features across disciplinary boundaries) but on the other hand, they are also sensitive to disciplinary variation (Bhatia 2004).

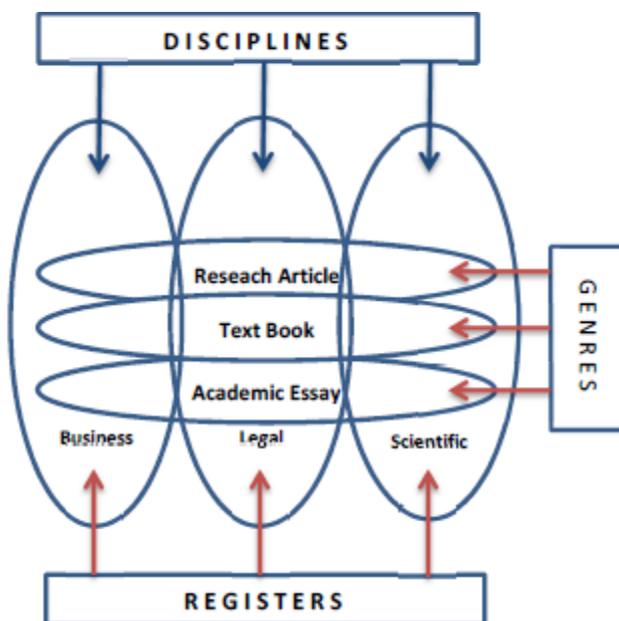


Figure 3: Registers, genres and disciplines in academic discourse

Despite the fact that there are distinctions in terms of theoretical grounding and research approaches between the above discussed traditions developing genre theory, they share several general characteristics of genre as a category of discourse:

- genres are socially situated;

- genres are purposeful and goal-oriented;
- genres are primarily a rhetorical category (Myers 2007, Hyland 2000, 2006);
- genres are intertextual, not isolated, and interact with each other (the intertextual relationships among genres have been described through metaphors such as dialogues (Bakhtin 1986), chains (Räsänen 1999), systems (Bazerman 1994, 2004), colonies (Bhatia 2004), networks of genres (Fairclough 2006), etc.

Bhatia (2004) also points out that despite their conventionalized features, genres tend to be dynamic, evolving and subject to constant changes and development, which is in congruence with the Prague school idea of the open character of the system of language. In fact, in contrast to the traditional view of genres as clearly distinct entities, more recent studies have begun to see genres in relation to other genres and how these are influenced by other genres, drawing attention to the notion of interdiscursivity. Garzone (2015) speaks about the appropriation of generic resources across discursive practices, which should be considered and analyzed across genres. Given the intensity and speed of information circulation, various forms of contamination between genres have become common, including *genre hybridization* (borrowing of lexicogrammatical resources), *genre mixing* (combination of two genres and their purposes), *genre colonization* (invasion of the generic integrity of a genre by another genre), and *genre bending* (“bending” of a genre to serve a purpose that is different to the original one), to name the most significant types (cf. Bhatia 2004; Fairclough 2003). Bhatia (2004), for example, demonstrates the proliferation of promotional resources in originally nonpromotional genres, such as a job interview or an academic introduction<sup>5</sup>.

Genre boundaries have been also challenged by Frow (2006, 3) with his concept of open-endedness of generic frames: the World Wide Web with its multi-media potential represents the most prominent example of such open-endedness, influenced by social and cultural factors. It comes as no surprise that the spread of Web-mediated communication and other communications technologies have opened up new, and virtually boundless, discursive as well as social spaces, bringing out a new line of development in genre analysis. In terms of the nature of Web genres, many of them have only been implemented into a new environment without significant adaptations, while in other cases genres have undergone some degree of alteration to make them suitable for the new environment (take, for example the online newspaper). In addition, a great many of new – Web-mediated – genres with unprecedented peculiarities have emerged – for instance, e-mails, blogs, home pages, etc. (cf. Knox 2009, Askehave and Nielsen 2004, Bazerman, Bonini and Figueiredo 2009). Thus, web genres have

5. It seems the pervasiveness of promotional discourse identified by genre analysts is part of an increasingly market-oriented attitude in all forms of communication. This phenomenon has been called «marketization» or «commodification» (Garzone 2015).

challenged traditional genre theory, bringing out new genre-analytical frameworks to deal with such genres (Garzone 2007, Garzone and Ilie 2014, Askehave and Nielsen 2004).

## 5. THE ROLE OF GENRE IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

Apart from literary studies, research on genres was slow to penetrate the domain of translation studies. In translation theory and practice, the functional approach (cf. the Skopos theory) of the last two decades of the twentieth century saw a shift from an overall concern with equivalence between source and target texts to a recognition of the need for adaptation to the target situation and purpose. Since equivalence is often difficult to obtain in translation across languages and cultures, additional criteria for successful translation are needed (Trosborg 1997). Developments in applied genre theory and primarily its applications have thus witnessed interesting implications for both the theory and practice of translation of professional discourse. More recent research has shown that genre analysis can help the translator develop strategies that facilitate their work and provide awareness of various options as well as constraints (Neubert and Shreve 1992, Hatim and Mason 1997).

Translation-related research into text categories coincides with the emergence of a functional approach to translation, and Katherina Reiss's (1971) text typology in particular. Since there is a terminological confusion between the terms *genre* and *text types*, having been frequently used interchangeably within translation studies, I will refer to Schäffner's paper to clarify the distinction between the terms. Schäffner (2000, 210) goes back to Reiss's categorization to explain that there is a differentiation between *Texttyp* and *Textsorte*: «*Texttyp* (text type) is understood as a category for a more abstract, theoretical classification of texts, whereas *Textsorte* (or *Textklasse*, i.e. genre, text class) is a label used for an empirical classification of texts as they exist in a human society». In other words, whereas *Textsorte* category corresponds to the notion of *genre* of the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the category of text type (*Texttyp*) is concerned with the properties of a text, in particular the way «a text is built up by means of, for example, narrative, descriptive, expository/or argumentative structural patterns» (Trosborg 2000, ix). It follows that Reiss's text types can be realized by different genres (text varieties), which are, unfortunately, not discussed further by Reiss, as she primarily deals with text types related to translation methods, discussed below<sup>6</sup>.

Reiss, similarly to the Prague School, borrows Bühler's three-way model of the functions of language, linking the three functions to their corresponding language

6. According to Schäffner (2000, 213), for example, a private letter would belong to the informative text type, whereas a begging letter would belong to the operative text type.

dimensions and to the communicative situations or text types (informative, expressive, operative and audiomedial type were added later) in which they are used (Munday 2001). According to Reiss (1971), a translation should transmit the predominant function of the source text. Despite the fact that Reiss's contribution to translation studies is important, as it shifted translation theory towards a consideration of the communicative purpose of the translation, it has been criticized as too rigid, prescriptive and its applicability in practice has been seen as limited (Fawcett 1997, Munday 2001, Snell-Hornby 1988).

Snell-Hornby (1988, 31), who herself criticized Reiss's categories for «the illusion of clear-cut objectivity», applies prototype theory to a text typology to demonstrate that, apart from certain clear-cut features between text types (that is prototypes), there are also blurred edges and overlappings, focusing on important aspects and criteria which are relevant for the translation process. Schäffner (2000, 214) points out in this context that translation as target text production involves adopting the target text to the genre conventions of the target culture: «[k]nowledge of cross-cultural similarities and/or differences regarding genres and genre conventions is crucial to the translator». It follows that the importance of uncovering the genre conventions of texts (both at micro- and macro-levels), as well as the publication of seminal works within genre theory by Swales (1990, 2004) and Bhatia (1993, 2004, 2017), have stimulated a growing interest in research on genre among translation scholars (Hatim and Mason 1997; Neubert and Shreve 1992; Trosborg 1997, 2000; House 1997).

Lawson (1983), for example, discovered that English, German and French patents are very similar in their macrostructures, as a result of international norms, but are different in their microstructures. Comparing examples of German and Czech academic texts, Čmejrková (1996) has shown that Czech academic texts are influenced by the German intellectual style. This intercultural differentiation may represent a problem when an academic text in Czech should be translated into English. Should a translator produce a target text in such a way that it corresponds to the Anglo-phonetic conventions, or rather stick to the surface level structure typical of Czech academic style (which includes impersonal constructions, passivization, hedging, long and difficult complex sentences, etc.)? Baker (1992) emphasizes that translators should adjust translations to target text textual conventions. In contrast, Hatim (2001; quoted in Biel 2018, 156) points out that although «the translator has limited scope to modify genres in translations, possibilities nevertheless exist at the level of genre-upholding lexical selection». It is difficult to find a correct answer to this question, but there is no doubt that the translator should discuss these intercultural differences with the author (that is the client) before adopting a particular translation strategy. This takes us to the topic of how genres impact the translator's decision-making process. For Hatim and Mason (1997), the category of genre represents a key factor affecting the translator's endeavour. I generally agree with Schäffner (2000) who points out that a translation-oriented contrastive analysis of genres might contribute to the formulation of guidelines

or recommendations as to the most appropriate solutions – depending, of course, on the particular translation assignment.

Another translation scholar who “profited” from integrating the category of genre into her theory was Julianne House (1977, 1997), who is primarily known for her translation quality assessment model. Since the description of linguistic features on a sentence level (register) did not allow for a more complex analysis of longer textual units or text types, in her revised version of the model, House (1997) integrated the category of genre, defining it as «a socially established category characterized in terms of occurrence of use, source and a communicative purpose or any combination of these» (ibid.: 107). Thus the resulting revised model consists of four levels: the function of the individual text (consisting of interpersonal and ideational functional components), genre, register and language/text: «[w]hile register captures the connection between texts and their “microcontext”, genre connects texts with the “macrocontext” of the linguacultural community in which a text is embedded» (House 2001, 248). Although the category of genre seems to be superordinate to the register (cf. Halliday 1978; Martin 1997), in House’s model both work in mutual interplay, complementing one another.

A promising research area with potential for further development of contrastive analysis of genres has been recently represented by genre-based corpus studies. A comprehensive book for corpus-driven analyses both of registers and genres was provided by Biber and Conrad (2009) under the name of Multidimensional analysis. In the field of translation, Mona Baker (1995) has been one of the pioneers comparing texts (translations against non-translations) with the attempt to identify distinctive features of translations. Brezina (2018) has recently published an excellent practical introduction to statistical procedures in corpus linguistics that might be also used to study generic conventions and other differentiations between genres. Whereas genre analysis usually prefers a qualitative approach to the study of genres, corpus linguistics has introduced quantitative methods. Nevertheless, research methodology is always dependent on the aspect of genre organization to be studied.

Last but not least, current research debates involving genre analysis deal with translation universals, that is distinctive universal features, «which may be products of translation process constraints and which are independent of language pairs, genres, cultures and translation norms» (Biel 2018, XX). A recent study by Delaere et. al. (2012) has indicated that genre represents a significant determinant of variations which impact features of translation. However, primarily in the domain of translation-oriented genre analysis, much work has to be done if translation studies are to advance theoretically (cf. Biel 2018), which is in line with House (2013, 56) who points out that «there is a deplorable lack of systematic contrastive pragmatic work on register and genre variation, which renders a solid theoretical underpinning of translation studies in this respect next to impossible».

## 5.1. Implications for Practice and Translation Training

I agree with Biel (2018) who points out that translation-oriented genre analysis usually involves a time-consuming cross-cultural contrastive approach to the source text and target language culture, which results in limited feasibility in practice. Nevertheless, the analysis can be applied only selectively, with a focus on those features which are most relevant for a particular translation assignment. In the following section, I would like to offer up Bhatia's (2004) multi-perspective model of applied genre analysis, narrowing it for translation needs. In order to illustrate the step-by-step procedure of this model in the translation process, I will take the *patient information leaflet* (PIL) as an example of a genre to be translated from English into the Czech language. Before doing so, I should emphasize that Bhatia's multi-perspective approach to genre-based analysis of written discourse draws on several types of analytical data which are thoroughly discussed in Bhatia (2004).

The model consists of the following seven steps:

(1) Placing the given genre-text in a situational context

A patient information leaflet may be regarded as a specific example of the genre of health-care information materials, of which PIL represents a particular subgenre.

(2) Surveying existing literature

Surveying existing literature on characteristic features of the genre in focus, including linguistic analyses of the genre in question, guide books and manuals relevant to the speech community in question. For a translator it is a must to conduct a review of all the sources available that might provide him or her with useful information.

(3) Refining the situational/contextual analysis

The contextual analysis might include *the communicative purpose*: although not stated explicitly, the general purpose of PILs is to clarify information for patients about how to use a particular drug safely; *situation-type*: the message has to be legible, clear and easy to use for the patients, a Braille version has to be available, if need be; *content*: identification of the medicine, therapeutic indications, information necessary before taking the medicine, dosage, description of side effects, additional information<sup>7</sup>; *participants*: expert informing "lay" person; *medium/channel*: written to be read, although often following a face-to-face consultation<sup>8</sup>. I am of the opinion that this part is of crucial importance for the translator as it provides a kind of translation brief for this

7. These six sections have to be contained in each PIL. It is of interest, that thanks to European legislation, the structure of the PIL is given for all European countries.

8. See Clerehan and Buchbinder (2006).

particular genre. Unless contextual aspects are taken into account by the translator, the final translation product cannot be functional.

#### (4) Selecting a corpus

This step deals with the corpus design and is relevant primarily to those researchers who want to conduct a linguistic genre analysis. Nevertheless, translators are encouraged to work with corpora as well: for example, a small corpus of parallel texts might provide a useful contrastive comparison between the source text and the target culture. Similarly, a monolingual corpus may also represent a very useful tool. By using a language corpus management system such as Sketch Engine, for example, translators can extract terms and keywords from a corpus they compiled themselves. Thus, a monolingual corpus made of the genre texts under analysis provides an invaluable source of the lexico-grammatical features of the genre in question.

#### (5) A textual, intertextual and interdiscursive perspective

A textual, intertextual and interdiscursive perspective deals with lexico-grammatical features, textual organization, cognitive or discourse structures (that is a typical generic or move structure) as well as the analysis of the role of intertextuality and interdiscursivity. This perspective represents, along with the contextual analysis discussed above, the most significant part of Bhatia's model for translators. Lexico-grammatical features stand for the notion of register in the SFL framework. Based on an analysis of the lexico-grammatical features of a number of PILs both in English and in Czech, and on the study of Clerehan and Buchbinder (2006), allow me to briefly summarize the most typical features of the genre in question: the use of a standard language variety, medical field-specific terminology, specific medical terms can be used but need to be transferred into a language which is comprehensible for a layman, a preference for Czech nomenclature over Latin terminology, high lexical density, a minimum of long sentence complexes, an active voice is preferred over the passive option, an emphasis on the use of comprehensible expressions, abbreviations and acronyms need to be explained when used for the first time, personal language such as «your doctor» is used with the aim of establishing an interpersonal relationship between a medical expert (albeit unidentified) and the patient<sup>9</sup>.

Moving to textual organization, it is worth looking at the starting point of the message, or Theme. Differences in Theme selection in PILs illustrate for the reader what the text producer wants to foreground at the clause level. PILs usually alternate two points of departure: first, the topical (that is “the patient” and “the drug”) and second, the textual (“if”, “then” following a cause and effect progression), which dominates

9. Due to space limitations of the present paper, I am not using specific examples from the analysed PILs.

in the side effects section: “If you experience any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse”. The amount of information provided should also be considered. Drug regulatory agencies recommend that the information provided be structured (in note form or bullet points rather than in the form of discursive prose) and the amount of information considered, as «longer paragraphs within a (comparatively) short document may add unnecessarily to the cognitive load» (Clerehan and Buchbinder 2006, 56).

To bring this perspective to an end, let me comment on discourse structures that deal with generic moves and rhetorical functions. Clerehan and Buchbinder (2006), having analysed 18 PILs, reveal that PILs usually contain between 3 to 9 moves at the macro level with alternating rhetorical functions (i. e. *inform*, *instruct* and *describe/explain*). However, further research is needed to confirm these findings. Despite the fact that it is probably not relevant for the translator to conduct a move analysis of the source text, it may be convenient for him or her to take into account the rhetorical functions involved, as they should be transferred into the target language. Their misinterpretation or omission by the translator may affect negatively the coherence of the target text.

#### (6) Ethnographic analysis

Ethnographic analysis focuses on the physical circumstances that influence the nature and construction of genre, critical moments of engagement or interaction (within the professional community), and available modes of genre construction or communication at critical moments. In my mind, this is a peculiar part of the analysis which is of limited use for translators. Nevertheless, one aspect is worth consideration. An ethnographic analysis includes the accounts of practitioner advice, guide books and manuals written for members of the relevant professional discourse community in question. It goes without saying that any consultation between the translator and a member of the professional community is highly welcomed and encouraged, as it may contribute to the higher quality of the final translation product.

#### (7) Studying the institutional context

The study of the institutional context may include the system and methodology in which the genre is used and the disciplinary conventions that govern the use of language in such institutional settings. Translators should consider here all the norms and legislation which might have any impact on the genre in question. With respect to PIL, it is a well-established genre which is subject to European as well as national legislation: for example in the United Kingdom all PILs as well as packaging and labelling information have to be approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), whereas in the Czech Republic it is the State Institute for Drug Control (Státní ústav pro kontrolu léčiv).

In the paragraphs above, I have presented Bhatia’s multi-perspective model of applied genre theory as a useful tool for translators. Being aware of the fact that the

application of the model to the source text and target culture language is extremely time demanding, I suggest that it be used selectively, with a primary focus on contextual analysis in combination with a textual, intertextual and interdiscursive perspective. It is beneficial for the translator to know how to conduct genre identification and genre analysis of both the source text as well as the target culture (cf. Biel 2018). While a knowledge of source text generic formats and conventions is important for adequate interpretation of the genre in question, a knowledge of target culture generic conventions facilitates the translation process and the reception of the final product. With respect to the translation of PILs, it is advisable to maintain the generic integrity of the source text in its recontextualized form, so that one can convey not only the textual meaning, but also the more conventionalized generic meaning of the source text (cf. House 2001, 2014).

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the present paper, I have attempted to present different theoretical frameworks within both Czech and Anglophonic stylistic traditions, demonstrating that notions of *style*, *register* and *genre* are viewed differently. I have shown that in the Czechoslovak tradition the functional approach prevails, defining style as a system of co-ordinated and interrelated language means intended to fulfill a specific function. While there are more theoretical as well as methodological conceptions to the notion of style in the Anglophonic tradition, in the stylistic linguistic perspective it is the notion of register that dominates with respect to lexico-grammatical patterning and the notion of genre as a rhetorically situated text with a generic integrity and constant communicative purpose used in a particular social setting. Having defined categories of register and genre, I have shortly touched upon the different theoretical frameworks in which they typically occur. I have also discussed the rather recent introduction of the notion of the communicative sphere to the Czech stylistic tradition, which shifts the Czech view of style from the traditional approach to the new stylistics, the focus of which is closer to the genre tradition of the Anglophonic world.

In the second half of the present paper, I have discussed the role of genre analysis in the translation studies paradigm, indicating certain core issues in the current research on genre as well as future perspectives for its further development.

Last but not the least, I have presented Bhatia's multi-perspective model of applied genre theory as a tool for analyzing texts, the aim of which is not necessarily, however, meant so much to classify but rather to clarify and explain the rationale of social behavior (Trosborg 1997; Fowler 1986). In this view, genre analysis involves both description as well as explanation. Viewed from the translation perspective, while the knowledge of source text generic formats and conventions is important for adequate interpretation of

the genre in question, a knowledge of target culture generic conventions facilitates the translation process. As such, genre theory represents a useful methodological tool for translators, working primarily with specific professional domains.

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