

# A genre-based approach to analysis of texts and translations

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Prispevek najprej na kratko določi razliko med besedilno vrsto oz. žanrom in registrom oz. jezikovno zvrstjo in opiše, kako lahko vsak od njiju igra vlogo v medjezikovni analizi besedil in prevodov. Besedilno vrsto je najbolje razumeti z vidika družbenega dejanja oziroma sporočilnega namena, to pomeni, da jo določimo v luči tega, kar želimo doseči z besedilom. Register odraža izbiro jezika v različnih situacijskih kontekstih, ključna spremenljivka pa je razmerje med sogovornikoma. Sporočilni uspeh besedila je odvisen tako od tega, v kolikšni meri se besedilo drži konvencij besedilne vrste, kateri pripada, in v kolikšni meri dosledno uporablja primeren register. Prispevek nadalje predstavi tudi analitični model, ki se ga lahko uporabi pri obravnavi izvirnih in prevedenih besedil ali pa pri obravnavi vzporednih besedil iste besedilne vrste v različnih jezikih. Predstavljeni model se delno naslanja na model kontrastivne funkcijske analize, ki ga je za kontrastivno funkcijsko analizo predvsem prevedenih besedil začrtal Andrew Chesterman (1998a). Ta model predvideva pristop k besedilu od vrha navzdol ter obravnava dejavnike, kot so situacijski in kulturni kontekst, besedilnovrstne konvencije, ureditev besedila in temeljno retorično strukturo, koherenco in težavnost procesiranja, kohezijo, informacijsko strukturo in značilni register ter leksiko-gramatične značilnosti.

**Ključne besede:** register, genre, context of situation, context of culture, discourse community, genre conventions, communicative purpose, translation strategy, coherence, cohesion, information structure

## INTRODUCTION

The first aim of the present paper is to define the concepts of genre and register, and to suggest how they can be used to describe situational variation among texts. An analytical model is then presented that can be applied either to source texts and their translations, or to comparative texts of the same genre in different languages. The model employs a top-down approach and considers factors such as cultural and contextual factors, genre conventions, text profile, coherence, cohesion, information structure and register features.

## GENRE ANALYSIS

The concept of genre has been taken by linguists from the field of literary studies, where it refers to types of literary works (from poem, novel, short story, play, to sub-genres such as detective novel, romantic novel, spy novel and so on), and broadened to include texts, both written and spoken, that arise in a wide range of situations, including everyday transactions. In Martin's (1985: 250) words, genres are "how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them". His examples include lectures, seminars, recipes, manuals, service encounters and news broadcasts.

Genre analysis sets out to explain socio-cultural, institutional and organisational constraints upon communication, as well as to identify conventionalised regularities in communicative events. In particular, it examines the *sui generis* features of particular textual genres. The major work in this field is by Swales (1990: 58, my emphasis), who defines a genre as:

a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent *discourse community*, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. The rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style.

A key concept here is that of discourse communities, which are "sociorhetorical networks" that form in order to be able to work towards a common set of rhetorical goals. The language activities of such communities are thus driven by *communicative purpose*. Language is used within a group as part of social behaviour to extend the group's knowledge and initiate new members. A discourse community differs from a speech community in that it is geographically scattered (possibly worldwide, as in the case of many academic communities) and writing based; moreover, it recruits members by training, persuasion or qualification (not birth or accident). Its primary determinants are functional: aimed at particular

objectives. Swales (ibid.: 24–27) sets out six defining characteristics of a discourse community:

1. has a broadly agreed set of common public goals (written or tacit);
2. has mechanisms on intercommunication among its members (meetings, reports, etc.);
3. uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback;
4. utilises and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims (discoursal expectations are created by the genres that articulate the operations of the discourse community);
5. in addition to owning genres, it has acquired some specific lexis (terminology, acronyms, etc.);
6. has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise.

We should note here that discourse communities can lose as well as gain consensus over time and break down into more than one community. In the “modern communication explosion” (Hatim and Mason 1997: viii), genres are evolving and influencing each other as never before and departures from norms of language use are becoming ever more frequent.

The principal feature that turns a collection of communicative events into a genre is some shared set of communicative purposes or goals (a communicative event is one in which language plays a significant and indispensable role – the concept is a fuzzy one for which it is hard to draw exact boundaries). Instances of genres vary in their prototypicality: a communicative purpose is the privileged property of a genre; other properties, such as form, structure and audience expectations operate to identify the extent to which an exemplar is prototypical of a particular genre (Swales 1990: 52). The rationale behind a genre establishes constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their content, positioning and form. However, because a particular contribution is accepted and labelled as belonging to a particular genre, it does not necessarily mean that it does – this is because names for classes of events spread beyond the initial community into broader communities whose criteria may differ. Swales goes along with Miller’s (1984) description of genres as unstable entities, the number of which is indeterminate in any society (as examples, Miller gives the letter of recommendation, the user manual, the progress report, the ransom note, the lecture, the white paper, as well as those traditionally studied by rhetorical scholars, such as the eulogy, the apologia, the inaugural address, the public proceeding and the sermon). Miller (ibid.: 151) also argues that the definition of genre must be centred not on the substance or form of discourse but on the *action* it is used to accomplish. An example is Fairclough’s (1995:

14) characterisation of a genre as “a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity”. Moreover, learning a genre involves learning not just a formal pattern or method of achieving a goal, but also clarifying what are accepted as goals by the community within which we are operating (Miller *ibid.*: 165).

Bhatia (1993: 16) takes his definition of genre from Swales, but places more emphasis on what he calls the psychological factors and their influence on the way the writer constructs the text in question: “each genre is an instance of a successful achievement of a specific communicative purpose using conventionalised knowledge of linguistic and discursive resources”. In order to succeed, the writer needs to conform to standard practices within the genre, although he/she may have a great deal of freedom with regard to the use of linguistic resources. Experts in a particular genre can exploit its conventions to achieve their private intentions within the socially-established framework. Examples would be the experienced news reporter who can give a particular slant to a supposedly objective news report, and the skilled counsel whose cross-examination in court is more concerned with winning the case than bringing facts to the attention of the court. However, members of the discourse community must be able to accept the text as an example of the genre for it to fulfil its purpose. As a socio-culturally dependent communicative event, a genre is judged effective to the extent that it can ensure pragmatic success in the context in which it is used (Bhatia *ibid.*: 39). It is the shared communicative purpose that shapes the genre and gives it internal structure; any major change to that purpose and a different genre is likely to result, while minor changes can help us to identify sub-genres.

Genre analysis starts with the text in its context of situation. The socio-cultural and professional nature of the discourse community that uses the genre should be defined and, within it, the writer of the text (individual or institutional), the audience, the relationship between them and their goals. We also need to identify surrounding texts and linguistic traditions that form the background to the genre, as well as identifying the topic or extra textual reality the text is trying to represent and the relationship between the text and that reality. The genre under consideration may be analysed in terms of communicative purpose, the situational context in which it is used and/or distinctive textual characteristics. The actual linguistic analysis may concentrate on one or more of three levels: *lexico-grammatical features*, *text-patterning* and *structural interpretation* (Bhatia *ibid.*: 24ff). The second of these involves looking at how members of a discourse community assign restricted values to various aspects of language use operating in a particular genre. In doing so, we explain the function of particular linguistic features in a specific genre, which helps us understand why members of secondary cultures write the way they do: for example, the use of noun phrases in ad-

vertisements to facilitate the introduction of numerous positive adjectives. The third level of analysis highlights the cognitive aspects of language organisation. Members of discourse communities seem to be relatively consistent in the way they organise their overall message in a particular genre. In order to explain this kind of structuring, Swales (1981) uses the notion of *rhetorical moves*: thus, for instance, in a study of academic research papers from a number of disciplines, he identifies a typical four-move structure that characterises the introductions to such texts. The move-structure in question is: 1. Establish the research field, 2. Summarise the previous research, 3. Prepare for present research, 4. Introduce the present research. Note that this structure is not prescribed: moves are representative options available to an author within a particular genre, but they can be realised in different ways or not at all.

From a cross-cultural point of view, it is worth noting that the genres most frequently discussed by analysts (such as academic research papers by Swales, sales promotion letters and job applications by Bhatia)<sup>61</sup> tend to follow an Anglo-Saxon approach and so the move structure varies little between languages. The field of science and technology, for example, in its “underlying infrastructure now relies upon an English-based sociology of knowledge” (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 156). It reflects deeply embedded cultural and rhetorical assumptions about relevance, organisation, acceptability and so on. The reality of scientific reports is constructed out of the social relations within the research community, which tries to maintain its own coherence and power structure. As we have already noted, individuals use language either to help them become members of such a discourse community, to cement relations with the community, or to determine and define who they are and what they believe within the community. Thus science writing constitutes a value-laden rhetorical activity (Grabe and Kaplan *ibid.*: 171) and to do it successfully you need a highly sophisticated sense of audience, as well as an ability to convey rhetorically charged information – to be persuasive without appearing to be so.

As far as translation is concerned, genre represents a useful way of looking at texts. The emphasis on the acceptability of any generic instance within the discourse community echoes the concept of acceptability within the target culture, as opposed to adequacy in relation to the source text (cf. Toury 1995). At the same time, the focus on communicative purpose matches the emphasis on the aim or purpose of the target text within *Skopostheorie* (cf. Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Vermeer 1978, 1989). In other words, both genre analysis and two influential trends within Translation Studies are concerned primarily with the target

<sup>61</sup> See Connor (1996: 132ff) for discussion of a range of cross-linguistic genre studies, primarily in the fields of academic writing (research articles, grant proposals), professional writing (CVs and job applications letters) business writing (particularly letters) and newspaper editorials. See also the article by Pisanski Peterlin in this volume, which mentions a number of cross-cultural studies of particular genres.

end of the communicative process and the way in which a text is received by its intended readership.

## REGISTER

The most influential discussion of register is still that found in the study of cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976), who introduce the concept in order to deal with textual meaning. The register is “the set of meanings, the configuration of semantic patterns, that are typically drawn upon under the specified conditions, as well as the words and structures that are used in the realisation of these meanings” (Halliday and Hasan *ibid.*: 23). Register has three elements: *field*, which covers subject matter, the purposive activity of the speaker/writer and the nature of the social action that is taking place (the focus is on what is happening); *tenor*, which covers the relevant role structure or social relations, both permanent and temporary (the focus is on who is involved); and *mode*, or symbolic organisation of the text and its function in the context, including the channel, which can be described as the axis spoken-written (the focus is on what part language is playing). There is also *rhetorical mode*, which is what the text is achieving in terms of narration, description, exposition and argument; these are referred to by rhetoricians as modes of discourse but also (e.g. Faigley and Meyer 1983) as “text types”, which is how they are frequently discussed within Translation Studies (for a discussion of the difference between text type and genre, see Limon 2003).

This tripartite model fits neatly with the three sets of underlying options, strands of meaning potential, or macro-functions identified by Halliday (1970), to which the options in the grammar of a language are related and which can be combined in any utterance, as required. The *ideational* function is concerned with cognitive meaning (related to our experience of the world, both internal and external) as well as with basic logical relations; in serving this function, language “gives structure to experience, and helps to determine our way of looking at things” (Halliday *ibid.*: 143). The *interpersonal* function relates to uses of the language to express social and personal relations, or the varying roles that we adopt in communication situations. These roles are defined by language itself: every language offers options whereby the user can vary his or her own communication role, making assertions, questioning, giving orders, expressing doubts and so on; these basic speech functions are expressed grammatically by the system of mood and differ when the role adopted by the language producer differs. Finally, the *textual* function enables us to construct texts or “connected passages of discourse that is socially relevant” (*ibid.*); and for Halliday it is the text, rather than the word or the sentence, that is the basic unit of language. These discussions of different language functions which can be realised simultaneously provide an alternative to

the assumption that language use, particularly in written text, is concerned only with the communication of information. The organisation of a written text indicates how it is to be read, but there is much more involved than the distribution of factual or propositional information – language is multi-functional. Thus field corresponds with ideational meanings, which are realised in the choices made within linguistic systems such as transitivity; tenor with interpersonal meanings, which find expression in the mood and modality of text; and mode with textual meanings, reflected in factors such as Theme-Rheme progression or distribution of given-new information (cf. Halliday 1967: 211; also Fries 1994: 233–234).

To hang together, texts need to display consistency of register: *coherence* of meaning is dependent not only on content, but on selection from the semantic resources of the language. A text is “*coherent* with respect to the *context of situation*, and therefore consistent in *register*; and it is coherent with respect to *itself*, and therefore *cohesive*” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 23, my emphasis). However, cohesion is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the creation of text and the relation of text to the context of situation is very variable. As it is hard to draw a line between the same and different situations, we cannot ask whether texts are in the same register, we can only ask in what respects they differ or are alike. In comparing texts, subject matter is no more or less important than other factors – indeed, the idea of a single register corresponding to any one situation is a myth (cf. Hatim 1997: 22ff). A text needs continuity of register – the pattern formed by the communicative event (field), the role-relationships of the participants (tenor) and the language acts within the event (mode). Moreover, register variables interact with each other so that, for example the overlap between tenor and mode gives rise to what Gregory and Carroll (1978: 53) call “functional tenor”, which is “the category used to describe what language is being used for in the situation” – in other words, is the speaker/writer trying to persuade, exhort, inform and so on (or, to put it another way, what is the communicative purpose of the text?) Ultimately, the key variable in questions of register is the relationship between those communicating:

The language we use varies according to the level of formality, of technicality, and so on. What is the variable underlying this type of distinction? Essentially, it is the role relationships in the situation in question: who the participants in the communication group are, and in what relationship they stand to each other. (Halliday 1978: 222)

Although cohesive relations are general to all kinds of texts, the forms taken by the cohesive relations will differ according to the register – clearly, texture in conversation and in formal written language is very different. Thus it is register, associated with classes of contexts of situation, which defines what a text means. In other words, text as the basic unit of meaning in language has to be interpreted in context and from a functional point of view.

## GENRE, REGISTER AND TRANSLATION ANALYSIS

Both genre and register have a role to play within text and translation analysis. Register reflects language use in different contexts of situation, but the key variable involved is the relationship between those communicating; thus register should not simply be equated with, say, subject matter or degrees of formality – the three elements of field, tenor and mode always interact with each other. Genres are best understood in terms of social action or communicative purpose – what we are using text to achieve. A text can be taken as an example of a particular genre if readers accept it as such, which is why genres have been referred to as socially ratified language use. It is useful to think in terms of genres being realised through registers or of genres having complementary registers: whereas register operates at the lexico-grammatical level, genres work at the level of discourse structure (cf. Couture 1986). Thus genres are structured texts that develop in a particular way (a research or business report would be a good example), whereas registers represent the more general linguistic choices that are made in order to realise genres (for example, the language of scientific reporting or bureaucratic style). We might also identify register with context of situation and genre with context of culture, which represent the two main dimensions within which texts vary (cf. Egging and Martin 1997). The key point here is that communicative success of a text depends both on its adherence to genre conventions and consistent use of appropriate register.

### AN ANALYTICAL MODEL

The analytical model or framework presented below draws upon a number of fields – in particular discourse analysis, genre analysis and contrastive rhetoric. The resulting approach to translation analysis is based on the functional comparison of texts across languages; this is linked to a functional approach to translation, which looks at the purpose of the target text and examines how successfully it has been realised through the translation process. The model is an eclectic and flexible one that is not tied to any particular linguistic model. It takes a top-down approach, starting with text in its situational and cultural context, including the rhetorical traditions and genre conventions associated with the two languages involved. It deals with contextualised meaning, considering individual items only in terms of their function within the text: translator decisions, even at word or phrase level, involve consideration of the wider context; moreover, text strategies precede the syntactic formation of individual sentences – we do not produce a sentence then give it “textual fit” after it is already there. The model focuses on communicative rather than systemic factors and deals with text in context or socially-situated language use. This means considering factors such as: setting,



participants (producer and receiver), roles (communicative and social), goals, social knowledge, norms and values, and institutional or organisational constraints upon communication. The model is designed to analyse the role played by translation within a specific process of social interaction at a particular point in time. It assesses language use in terms of markedness, which relates to reader expectations, and deals with text as process as well as product, i.e. how it is interpreted by the translator and by the final reader to construct a meaningful textual world. Its point of departure is acceptability to the target audience, rather than adequacy in relation to the source text. Finally, at the practical level, it looks for similarity rather than identity, as relativist notions are more suited to translation (cf. Cheshire 1998a: 39ff), and aims only for explanatory adequacy – no translation analysis can be truly exhaustive, if for no other reason than that the target system is in a constant state of flux.

## GOALS OF THE MODEL

To understand the meaning of any text, including a translation, we need to consider both the *context of situation* in which it occurs and the broader context of culture within which it functions. Thus we have to look not simply at the completed translation but at the whole process by which the translation was produced, the reader's interaction with it and the context within which that interaction takes place. The starting point for such a description is the translators and their linguistic and experiential background, the institutional environment in which they operate, the strategies they employ, and the translation and revision procedures involved in the translation process. (These are the kinds of questions touched upon in the paper by Limon in this volume on sociological approaches to translation.) In order to understand the *context of culture*, we need to look first at the languages involved in the translation process, as well as the rhetorical and textual conventions associated with these languages. If English is one of the pair, then the special factors relating to the dominance of Anglo-Saxon cultural values within many fields of communication and the use of English as one of the main working languages within the European Union may need to be discussed.

*Genre analysis* sets out to explain socio-cultural, institutional and organisational constraints upon communication, as well as to identify conventionalised regularities in communicative events (bearing in mind that such regularities are likely to vary between different languages and cultures). For an assessment of how well a translated text functions in comparison with similar texts within the target culture, the concept of genre is more useful than that of text type (defined in terms of predominant rhetorical purpose) or register (which represents the more general linguistic choices that are made in order to realise genres). Thus the

translated text we are analysing can be compared with a “control text”, or comparable text matched for genre, as well as with the source text; this comparison can extend to sub-genres identified within the text. We thus try to identify the conventions by which the reader, who may be an expert member of the relevant discourse community, is likely to accept the translated text as an exponent of the genre.

Central to any genre analysis is the identification of the *communicative purpose* or the goal of the text, as this constitutes the rationale for the genre. As such, it is crucial to any evaluation of whether translation purpose is achieved. It is important also because it helps determine the structure of the discourse and constrains both the content and how that content is expressed.

Text is about more than communicating information. Any textual analysis needs to take into account the three strands of potential meaning that we have already discussed: the *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual* functions. In order to achieve this, we borrow partly from the model of Contrastive Functional Rhetoric presented by Chesterman (1998a) and partly from the methods of genre analysis as described by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993). Of the “text specifiers” relating to the ideational aspects of messages described in the former we are most concerned with “profile” (Chesterman *ibid.*: 170ff), or the way in which ideas proceed through the text and the general structure of its meaning. To analyse this profile to a greater degree of delicacy, we can compare the surface ordering of the text with its underlying rhetorical structure, describing the degree of fit between them. In relation to interpersonal meaning, we rely on the generic concept of communicative purpose, as well as the register variables, particularly tenor (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976: 23). Finally, as far as textual meaning is concerned, we can look at different aspects of coherence as described in Chesterman’s (*ibid.*: 183ff) functional model. This involves metatextual features<sup>62</sup> – such as previewing (where the reader is told what the current chapter, section or paragraph will be about), signposting (where the reader is referred to a different part of the text for clarification or further information, thus making clear to the reader the organisation of the text), and summarising – as well as the surface realisations of coherence, which can be dealt with under the heading of cohesion. It also involves informational coherence or “informativity”, which can be analysed in terms of information structure – in particular, conformity with unmarked given-new patterns – and intertextual coherence, the implicit aspects of which we deal with in terms of degree of conformity to genre conventions, while explicit intertextual references are noted when allusions are made to related texts.

<sup>62</sup> See Pisanski Peterlin (2005, 2008) for a discussion of metatext and metadiscourse in research articles.

The key to understanding both the process of translation and to judging its product is to see the meaning of the text as negotiated between producer and receiver (Hatim and Mason 1990: 64–65). Texts are not passively received: the reader is actively and creatively engaged in a hermeneutic process drawing upon not only language and culture, but also experience and perception (Stolze 2001). The meaning or function of a text is not inherent in the linguistic signs of which it is composed, but rather a text is made meaningful by and for its receiver (Nord 1997: 31). The model deals with the *coherence* of the text in terms of how easy it is for the reader to process at particular junctures; the involvement of extra cognitive cost at any point in the text is likely to relate back to the text's conformity to genre conventions. There is a contrast here between *cohesion*, which is objective, and coherence, which is subjective, so that judgements concerning it may vary from reader to reader (Hoey 1991). We can define coherence as “a covert potential meaning relationship among parts of a text, made overt by the reader or listener through processes of interpretation” (Blum-Kulka 1986: 17). In order to maintain coherence, the translator needs to strike a balance between what is effective, i.e. achieves the communicative goal, and what is efficient, i.e. places fewest demands on user resources (cf. Beaugrande and Dressler 1981: 11). The translator also needs to be aware that tolerances and preferences with regard to coherence differ between languages and genres. However, discussion of whether a text coheres or makes sense is hard to separate from analysis of the surface features that signal the underlying connections between parts of the text, i.e. cohesive features, and the way that information is distributed through the text, i.e. its information structure. Although the model deals with coherence, cohesion and information structure separately, they clearly interact with and are mutually dependent on each other. Finally, to hang together, texts need to display consistency of *register*: coherence of meaning is dependent not only on content, but on selection from the semantic resources of the language, which is the subject of the final stage of analysis within the model.

The intended meaning of a text emerges only when pragmatic factors are taken into account, i.e. who is saying what to whom and for what purpose. However, discourse analysis does not separate such user-centred features from the text-centred features just discussed. The textual category of *situationality* covers the circumstances of the interaction, including socio-cultural factors, and whether the text is relevant to this situation of occurrence. This can be analysed in part by seeing how text users interact with register variables such as field, mode and tenor. A useful distinction when assessing communicative purpose is that between “situation monitoring”, i.e. when the main function of a text is to provide a relatively unmediated account of the situation model, and “situation management”, i.e. when the main purpose is to steer the situation towards the text producer's goals. This category is best described in terms of dominances rather than

either-or terms (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981: 163ff). The category of *intentionality* relates to the writer's goals, realised both globally and locally within the text, with varying degrees of explicitness, which the translator seeks to convey to target readers in a manner appropriate to the context of situation. One such global goal is to make the text acceptable to a particular discourse community so that the text receiver accepts that the text has some relevance or use in terms of acquiring information or taking action (i.e. the category of *acceptability*). These categories enter into our analysis when we talk about communicative purpose and about how the text conforms to genre conventions, which in turn impacts on ease of processing. In a similar way, the category of *intertextuality*, which is key to the translator's work, is constantly present in the analysis due to comparison with the control text and reference to reader expectations when assessing ease of processing. Finally, as already noted, *informativity* of content, or the degree of givenness and certainty in the text, is analysed under the heading of information structure.

## STEPS IN THE ANALYSIS

Translation description can focus on three fundamental aspects of the translation and its environment: the intralinguistic profile of the translation compared to a non-translated text of the same genre in the target culture; the interlinguistic profile of the translated text in relation to its source text; and the extralinguistic relations between the translation, the situation in which it is produced and the socio-cultural context in which it is embedded (Chesterman 1998b: 204). The analytical model considers all three of these aspects. The analysis comprises 9 main steps, as follows:

1. Describe the context of situation
2. Analyse the context of culture
3. Identify the communicative purpose
4. Identify relevant genre conventions
5. Analyse the text profile
6. Assess the coherence of the message
7. Analyse in terms of cohesion
8. Analyse in terms of information structure
9. Describe representative register features

The order in which these steps are applied can be varied. The main organising principle is top-down or starting at the "highest" level (the whole text in context) and working down to the "lowest" (the linguistic detail of the text). Another way of describing the approach would be to say that it starts out in the broadest possible way and gradually narrows its focus. Of course, all such analyses are incom-

plete: there is almost no limit to the amount of detail that the analyst can consider at the lexico-grammatical level. The level of delicacy depends on the aims of the analysis: when these have been achieved, then further detail is unnecessary, however interesting it may be in its own right.

Below we shall say more about how to apply the model, giving specific examples based on an earlier study (Limon 2004a), in which it was applied to one of the annual progress reports submitted by Slovenia as an applicant country, the *NPAA Report 2000*, which is the English translation of the text *Državni program za prevzem pravnega reda EU – Poročilo 2000*. The *NPAA Report* was the central document in the integration process of the Republic of Slovenia into the EU. For purposes of genre comparison, the document *2000 Regular Report from the Commission on Slovenia's Progress Towards Accession* (hereafter *Regular Report*) was used. This was written in English and could be said to represent a response to the report submitted by Slovenia (it was not possible to obtain a control text in the form of a progress report from an applicant country written in English, because all of the reports submitted were translations).

## 1. Context of situation

The first step involves describing the context in which the translation is being produced and who is involved in the translation process – the translator(s), commissioner, author(s) of the original and possible language reviser(s) or editor(s) – as well as the translation brief, if there is one. The character of the translator, his/her cultural environment and knowledge base are an important part of translation evaluation (cf. Wilss 1999: 146); it is also important to understand the institutional constraints affecting the translator's work (Koskinen 2000). Analysis of the situation in which the translation is produced can offer valuable insights into why translators have translated in the way that they have. One crucial factor, for instance, is whether translators are working into or out of their first language and whether their work is systematically revised. Another is which genres the translators usually deal with and whether they are familiar with the genre conventions of the target text (for example, a translator may usually deal with technical, legal or administrative texts and only very occasionally be asked to translate, say, a promotional text or letter). Other relevant factors include the translation infrastructure available (e.g. software, glossaries) and presence or absence of coordination or project management.

According to information obtained from the body responsible, the Government Office for European Affairs (SVEZ), the translation of the *NPAA Report* in 2000 involved 24 in-house and freelance translators, none of whom were native speak-

ers of English (and, of course, none of whom were university graduates of translation, because no such graduates had yet appeared in Slovenia). The translated text was not subject to English language revision, due to time pressures and the unavailability of appropriately qualified personnel.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the process of compiling and translating the report was not subject to any overall co-ordination. There seemed to be a lack of any clear guidance for the writers of the different parts of the original report, who were located in many different ministries. As far as I was able to establish, the overall structure of the *NPAA Report* was based on the list of negotiating chapters drawn up in Brussels, but no detailed guidance was offered on issues such as content, form, length and layout. Similarly, the approach taken to the writing and compilation of the report seems to have been an *ad hoc* one: the purpose or goal of the report and the strategy to be used was not set down anywhere and the writers did not receive any prior functional training in report writing.

## 2. Context of culture

The broader linguistic and cultural background helps us to identify the communicative purpose of the translated text and the reader expectations that may be present in relation to the genre in question.

When a powerful TL such as English, which enjoys cultural hegemony and prestige compared to Slovene, is involved in the translation process one would expect motivated interventions by translators (cf. Venuti 1995). Similarly, one might expect to find different strategies being employed with regard to translation into and from more peripheral cultures (cf. Bassnett 1993: 142ff). When translating from English into Slovene, it does seem to be the case that in many fields (academic and scientific writing, as well as computing, telecommunications and marketing texts are obvious examples) Anglo-Saxon cultural values are widely seen as universal or neutral: no cultural filter is employed, but rather rhetorical patterns and register values are imported directly into Slovene, influencing a wide range of genres. However, in the case of the text discussed the opposite seemed to be the case, i.e. Slovene textual features were transferred into the target text in English. This is probably because of the translation strategy employed, which we have already discussed, and also because the translators involved were translating out of their mother tongue, which clearly has a strong influence on what they produce in the (foreign) target language.

<sup>63</sup> For a detailed discussion of the limitations of language revision of translations by native speaker language revisers see Limon (2004b: 51-52). The main drawback identified is that revision focuses largely on surface detail, which may ensure that the translated text is largely free from obvious grammatical error, but does not guarantee either accuracy, for which the translator has to be responsible, or communicative effectiveness.

### 3. Communicative purpose

Although in our research example the analysed text and the control text belong to the same genre, we can expect them to differ in terms of communicative purpose, due to the different status and communicative role of their (institutional) authors. They have certain general features in common: multiple authorship, with the authors unidentified (formally institutional); an institutional addressee; third person “angle” (cf. Chesterman 1998a: 170); reference to the same time frame (12 months); the overall content determined by the same institution (European Commission, as evaluator of the reports); a focus on action taken – legislation adopted, international conventions ratified and other measures implemented – with the result that a limited range of action verbs is used; and a shared structure.

Although reporting may be seen as a detached genre, the exposition that takes place within it (either temporal or conceptual) will have differing degrees of detachment according to rhetorical purpose, leading at times to significant shifts in function. The result of this will be text type hybridisation, with a move away from the predominant focus (cf. Hatim 1997: 42) to a subsidiary one: for example, in the *NPAA Report* towards argumentation (i.e. where mitigatory circumstances are being cited) or in the *Regular Report* towards instruction (i.e. where future action is recommended or prescribed). To conclude: the main goal or communicative purpose of the two texts (and that which shapes them as examples of the genre) is exposition, with persuasion and mitigation as the subsidiary goals of the Slovene report, and evaluation and exhortation as subsidiary goals of the report from Brussels.

### 4. Genre conventions

Writing is an attempt to communicate with the reader; the writer has intentions and a purpose, as well as information to convey. Texts have a hierarchical structure that differs due to the purpose, audience, status, author, information load and genre (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 54ff). Beyond surface form, the text is organised by the writer’s relation to it, by the reader’s assumed knowledge and by the subject matter. The information structure guides the reader as to the writer’s intent, showing what is presupposed and what thematic information is highlighted. This structure is constrained by text ordering and by how rapidly and from what perspective the author wants to present information: too much or too little information can affect the text’s coherence, making it difficult for the reader to process. It can also lead to inferences being made by the reader that were not anticipated by the writer. In order to write successfully, the writer needs to be

familiar with rhetorical patterns in a language, composing conventions, intersentential syntax, coherence creating patterns, writing conventions, audience expectations and subject knowledge (Grabe and Kaplan *ibid.*: 171ff).

According to a guide in English on report writing (Gravett 1998: 27), the main ingredients of a good report are that it is “user-friendly, written for its intended audience and achieves the author’s purpose”. The writer needs a strong awareness of the reader’s needs (determined largely by experience and by feedback) in order to produce a report with a low “cognitive cost”, i.e. one that is easy to process and thus more likely to achieve its goals (Gravett *ibid.*: 13). User-friendliness is achieved through: systematic organisation and layout; clarity of expression and lack of verbosity; and clear development, with each point leading naturally on to the next and with intentions clearly signposted (Gravett *ibid.*: 14). The writer thus needs a clear set of objectives and a clear plan of writing – although there is a heuristic element in all writing, less skilled writers generate content during composition without sufficient attention to goals. As Grabe and Kaplan (*ibid.*: 116) put it: “good writers have a richer sense of what they want to do when they write, and have a fully developed image of the rhetorical problem”. One aim of the analysis discussed here was to determine whether the writer(s) and translator(s) of the *NPAA Report* had this defined sense of purpose, sufficient audience knowledge, a clear rhetorical perspective and an adequate control of genre conventions.

## 5. Text profile

The next step in the analysis involves comparison of the underlying rhetorical structure of the text with its surface ordering or organisation in order to determine the degree of fit between them or “text profile”. This basically involves breaking down the text into its underlying “rhetorical moves” (see above) and comparing this with how the text is structured into sections, sub-sections and in particular paragraphs. This can help determine whether the message is being clearly communicated or whether unnecessary demands are being made on the reader.

The structure of the control text was a frequent point of comparison during this process. Two representative chapters were analysed in detail, followed by three sub-genres – introduction, evaluation and conclusion. During this stage of the analysis, I evaluated the extent to which the lack of fit between the rhetorical and surface organisational structures could be ascribed to the original writing process and how much it was due to the translation process. I found that issues connected to the way in which the text is ordered and how this relates to the underlying rhetorical structure can be addressed to some extent through the translation process. However, less localised problems – such as those concerning the structure of the



sections relating to the negotiating chapters and the information they contain – can only be dealt with through liaison between the translator, as an expert in intercultural communication, and the author, in an interactive process of review and amendment.

## 6. Coherence

The sixth step focuses on coherence, which can be defined in terms of reader interpretation and ease of processing. Analysis here involves other aspects of the text such as cohesion and information structure, metatextual features, text content, writer strategy and level of information, as well as surface features such as paragraph organisation and the detailed lexico-grammatical choices made by the writer and translator. Coherence is dependent on a multiplicity of inter-related factors. These include the order in which information is presented to the reader and the way in which that information is divided up, as well as genre conventions such as clear development and signposting (see above), clarity of expression, and lack of verbosity. In a number of cases, the lack or omission of a cohesive link, the reliance on lexical cohesion in the form of repetition, or unclear anaphoric reference, place unnecessary demands on the reader. Finally, marked information structure patterns subvert reasonable reader expectations. Thus the quality of reader-friendliness can be said to be distributed at all levels of the text and cannot easily be separated out from other characteristics.

In the discussed study the control text has an abundance of metatextual features, whereas the lack of clear introductory or concluding paragraphs, overview statements (summarising part of the text), clear divisions between and indications of steps taken, transition statements (between one part of the text and another), or of graphic signals (which may include numbering, bullet points, indentation, use of different text sizes, fonts or text styles) means that the translated report lacks metatextual coherence and thus the cognitive cost to the reader becomes much higher.

The following two steps in the analysis are concerned with aspects of the text closely linked its coherence: cohesion, which might be described as the surface manifestation of the underlying relations within the text, and information structure, or the way that information flows or is distributed through the text.

## 7. Cohesion

The kind of questions to be dealt with here are: whether there has been any transfer of cohesive features from the ST to the TT resulting in marked language use;

whether there has been any loss of cohesion during the translation process; and how the translator can compensate for the differences between the SL and TL with regard to cohesive preferences. The findings in the research example can be summarised as follows: cohesion was most frequently achieved in the TT through lexical means, particularly repetition and the use of semantically-related terms; there are clearer cohesive patterns in the control text, with more frequent use of connectives and of anaphoric reference, and less repetition. In a number of cases, lexical cohesive features had been omitted by the translator, but not replaced by elements of grammatical cohesion. Notwithstanding this, the level of repetition in the TT is highly marked. At the same time, reader expectations are often not met, due to the infrequent use of reference words, particularly determiners, and the low level of conjunction; processing of the text is also made more difficult by the lack of cohesive links between paragraphs, especially where enumeration is the mode of presentation.

## 8. Information structure

Discussion at this level needs to take account of the strategic differences between English and Slovene word order relating to given-new patterns, rising information load and the principle of end-weight (cf. Biber et al 1999: 896ff). In English, the unmarked pattern is given-new; there is also a preference for a gradual rise in information load within the clause (the information principle) and for long and complex elements to occur towards the end of the clause (the principle of end-weight).<sup>64</sup> The discussed analysis of the TT uncovered a number of violations of these principles, unmotivated by communicative factors and usually arising from the replication of the word order of the original.

## 9. Register features

Which register features are analysed and to what degree of delicacy depends very much on the particular genre and the research goals. In the research example, the focus of this stage of the analysis was on how the author realised the subsidiary communicative purpose of persuasion and whether the translator's work had supported or undermined the achievement of this aim. I looked first at three techniques used in order to persuade the reader that progress had been made: the accumulation of detail with regard to action taken; the selection of adjectives and quantifiers to modify nouns; and the frequent use of collocations involving the

<sup>64</sup> Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 54ff) point out that in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, "poor" writing is often equated with writing that forces readers to make too many inferences by failing to provide sufficient given information derivable from co-text or context.

noun “Europe” and the derived adjective. I also looked at marked uses of the passive voice in the translation, the effect of the translator's individual lexical choices on the tenor of the text and, briefly, the text's modality.

There is insufficient space here to go into further detail: for a much more detailed application of the model see Limon (2004a: 106ff). The reader may also be interested in looking at a number of student undergraduate dissertations that have been influenced by this model, which have looked at varied non-literary genres such as sales promotion letters (Šušterič 2004), instructions for use (Žan 2005), company web sites (Benec 2008), tourist brochures (Černeck 2009) and articles on architecture (Vidovič 2009).

## CONCLUSION

The concepts of genre and register are both of relevance to the analysis of texts and translations. When we discuss genre we are concerned with what we are using text to achieve – with text's communicative purpose and sociorhetorical function. For that reason, an analysis model that takes genre into account begins by considering not the detail of the text itself, but the context of situation and the context of culture. The former of course includes the (institutional) context in which the translation took place and the translator(s) with all their previous experience and world knowledge. This in turn leads us to try to identify translation norms that may have influenced the act of translating (see the other article by Limon in this volume). The context of culture includes linguistic and cultural differences between the relevant source and target cultures; two aspects of this are the differing rhetorical traditions and the conventions relating to the specific genre.

Another important aspect of any text, translation or not, is the message it is trying to communicate and how easy it is for the reader to process that message, which is dependent on the text's coherence. This is a subjective category, but there are aspects of the text that can be analysed to identify factors that are likely to hinder rather than ease processing, as well as metatextual elements that make the reader's job easier. We can also compare the underlying rhetorical structure of the text with its surface structure into sections, sub-sections, paragraphs and even sentences. Identifiable surface elements that are central to text analysis are cohesive features and information structure or distribution of given and new information, both of which contribute to comprehensibility. Finally, as we noted earlier, genres are realised through registers, which operate at the lexico-grammatical level. The communicative success of a text depends both on its adherence to genre conventions and consistent use of appropriate register. The yardstick for judging these

two factors with regard to a translation is not the source text but the target culture and other texts within that culture that belong to the same genre.

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