

## Summary

The article deals with the problem of teaching auditing as an important aspect of consecutive and simultaneous translation. The main difficulties have been analysed. The ways of overcoming them are determined.

## SUPPORT GENRES IN SLOVAK UNIVERSITY SETTINGS

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### **c) Introduction**

The study of academic discourse in English has a relatively short history. By now there is no doubt that English is recognized as the universal language of science and international communication in the world of globalization. The response to this new situation in higher education institutions around has been the development of a new academic discipline, English for Academic purposes, whose educational needs are not easy to identify. The paper is an attempt to identify the genres of academic discourse that students may encounter in the process of their working activities.

### **d) Support genres**

In the life of academics there are numerous tasks and activities which cannot be considered purely educational or research, but we face them on a daily basis and have to deal with them.

They require a lot of academic and professional expertise which has not been acquired in previous education. As Swales [1996: 46] observed:

*There are, in fact, quite large numbers of genres that operate to support and validate the manufacture of knowledge, directly as part of the publishing process itself, or indirectly by underpinning the academic administrative processes of hiring, promotion and departmental review.*

*Some of these genres are, spoken, ..., but most are written. ... On the one hand, they are typically formal documents which remain on file; on the other, they are rarely part of the public record. They are written for specific individual or small-group audiences, and yet may also be seriously invested with demonstrated scholarship and seriously concerned with representing their authors in a favourable professional light. More importantly, however, exemplars of these*

*genres are typically hidden, 'out of sight' or 'occluded' from the public gaze by a veil of confidentiality.*

Swales [1996: 47] offers a partial list of the genres that are occluded, hidden from public record, which graduate students and staff can encounter in the process in their academic activities arranged in an approximate 'reverse order' of seniority:

1. Request letters (for data, copies of papers, advice, etc.);
2. Application letters (for jobs, scholarships, etc.);
3. Submission letters (accompanying articles, etc.);
4. Research proposals (for outside funding, etc.);
5. Recommendation letters (for students, job seekers, etc.);
6. Article reviews (as part of the review process);
7. Book or grant proposal reviews (as above);
8. Evaluation letters for tenure and promotion (for academic committees);
9. External evaluations (for academic institutions).

The number of occluded, less public genres discussed in the following sections does not cover all the genres listed above, however, because some of them are not typically used in Slovak higher educational settings.

#### **a. The Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

The Curriculum Vitae is a Latin expression for *course of life* and accompanies an individual through his or her studies and professional career virtually throughout the course of their lives. It is a genre supporting one's career, primarily autobiographical, giving relevant information about the writer-applicant, often written for some particular occasion for a small-group committee, but may also be considered a public document, if it's available on the web or in print.

The CV is a dynamic genre in many respects. First, its format develops with time. From the original autobiographical narrative and descriptive document which was used for years in our part of Europe and which focused also on family background and family members for both political and traditional reasons, we now tend to have a structured document that has a pre-designed schematic format. One of the reasons for that is to foster readability and transparency. Secondly, it is a 'living' document [cf. Swales and Feak 2000: 258-65], it changes and grows with time as our experience, qualifications and various skills expand.

The range of information included in the CV may change according to the cultural context and the audience for which it is intended. In some countries it is, for example, not permitted to ask information about the date of birth, sex, nationality and family background (marital status, children, etc.), as it is not politically correct to select/exclude potential applicants on the basis of such criteria/information.

With the increase of student and labour mobility in the new European context, it was felt that some steps should be taken to facilitate mobility throughout Europe

for (lifelong) learning and occupational purposes. Within the framework of the Europass initiative, a generalised European format of a Europass CV was designed and approved by the European Council. The template is available on the Internet (<http://europass.cedefop.eu.int>) and can be downloaded for further use, or one can create their personal CV and save it on the web for further use.

The Europass CV offers a wide range of sections to be filled in from different areas of life, it is helpful in that it also gives hints on the possible personal skills and competences one might not think of oneself having. On the other hand, the template allows a large amount of flexibility, giving options to remove the majority of section elements (marked with a star \*) which the writer might consider as inappropriate or not relevant for that particular purpose or audience. The generalised format gives all individuals an equal chance; a starting line from which to write a good CV. How they decide to fill in the respective blocks will be influenced by the communicative purpose and the intended audience and cultural environment.

The suggested template includes the following main sections processed in steps:

1. Personal information
2. Desired employment/Occupational field
3. Work experience
4. Education and training
5. Language(s)
6. Personal skills and competences
7. Additional information and annexes
8. Save your CV

Curriculum Vitae is a document whose primary communicative purpose is informative, i.e. to provide the target audience (the respective group of people who have a decisive role) with the information they need about all aspects of our academic work: research, teaching and organization. This type of self-evaluation is in a way an assertive act of self-promotion trying to ‘sell’ oneself in order to get a chance to be successful.

#### **b. The Letter of Application (LA)**

The Letter of Application is the basic part of the ‘Application package’ and it can be an application for a job, position, further education (graduate, postgraduate), and fellowship, etc. The main function of any application is ‘clarificatory’ [Bhatia 1993: 165] sharing a common communicative purpose of this genre to persuade the reader and “to obtain an interview for a job by highlighting the most relevant information in the candidate’s curriculum vitae” [Henry & Roseberry 2001: 155] and eventually to gain entrance to a workplace. Like a CV it is a kind of self-evaluation, self-presentation and even self-promotion with the main objective to

'sell' oneself to the review committee, the potential employer or sponsor. Although it may contain and develop some elements of the CV, it is not an autobiography.

A job application letter is formalized to a great degree typically comprises several moves (units of discourse), such as stating the purpose of the letter, establishing the applicant's credentials, enclosing documents, requesting an interview, and ending politely (Bhatia 1993).

Henry & Roseberry [2001: 155] give a more detailed analysis of the genre of LAs and describe the most frequent rhetorical strategies in their corpus of 40 native English speaker letters of application for a range of different positions. They identified the eleven moves which appeared regularly in the typical order in the examined corpus [2001: 159]:

- Opening
- Referring to a Job Advertisement
- Offering Candidature
- Stating Reasons for Applying
- Stating Availability
- Promoting the Candidate
- Stipulating terms and Conditions of Employment
- Naming Referees
- Enclosing Documents
- Polite Ending
- Signing Off

The list of moves documents the presence of elements common to all business letters (Opening, Polite Ending and Signing Off), but also a strong presence of Promotion moves that draw on Bhatia's [1993] moves Establishing Credentials and Offering Incentives.

The most striking feature found in the corpus was the frequent use of first person pronouns 'I' (most frequent) and 'my' (eighth in the LA corpus) which supports the idea of a strong presence of self-evaluation and self-promotion strategies in this genre.

On the other hand, cross-cultural analyses of job applications written by non-native speakers of English revealed that they are more modest and less assertive in their self-presentation and self-appraisal than their Anglo-American counterparts [Bhatia 1993, Nkemleke 2004].

This does not seem to present a major problem yet, since letters of application do not represent a frequent genre in the Slovak academic community. But with the increase in the internationalization of the academic and professional world and the opening of the European academic job market, non-native English-speaking

graduates and scholars will be more tempted to apply for academic positions outside their native region. To make them understand that different strategies, even if only in writing job applications, are effective in different cultures will be one of the future tasks of EAP teachers.

### **c. The Letter of Recommendation (LR)**

The Letter of Recommendation represents also an integral part of the basic 'Application package' that applicants (students, academics, job seekers) send out to their potential supervisors and employers. The primary communicative purpose of this genre is to recommend *admission, funding or advancement*. As Yates and Orlikowski [1994] document, it evolved from the process of employment procedures as a response to a recurrent situation within organizational contexts and the need to get information and evaluation of prior performance of the applicant. The recommendation letters are essentially the same as reference letters or testimonials, but the latter are usually sent to an unknown employer, and so they can be neutral or even negative. But as Bhatia indicated that the original idea of reviewing "the candidate's suitability for a particular job ... in practice most often turns out to be a letter of recommendation, i.e. a positive evaluation of the competence of the candidate in question" [Bhatia 2004: 60]. As such the recommendation letter resembles sales promotion letters promoting a product or service to a potential customer in order to 'selling' it.

Letters of recommendation represent one type of discourse of letters that differs from typical business letters to less formal personal letters written in the process of academic communication between colleagues. The difference between submission letters, reprint requests, application letters, etc. on one hand, and letters of recommendation on the other, is that while the former are written by the applicant himself or herself, the latter are written by a different person, usually a superior, whose task is to evaluate the intellectual potential and personal and professional qualities of the candidate for membership of the respective academic community. Thus the writer also fulfils a gatekeeping role and bears a considerable amount of responsibility for what he or she says about the applicant. The LRs, unlike other academic genres, are untypically written for fellow academics, members of small committees to read and make a gatekeeping decision.

Therefore it is strongly advised to request a recommendation letter from someone who will write a positive and effective recommendation letter, who is informed about the requester's personal and professional qualities and who knows of the goals he or she wants to achieve, even if on the basis of additional support information. Otherwise the recommendation can be too general and vague, or even negative.

As Swales rightly comments, there is a wide range of opinion as regards what can be considered a 'strong' letter of recommendation because this varies substantially

from one academic culture to another. In the Central European tradition this genre had not been frequently used until the frontiers opened and many students and staff started utilizing the opportunities to apply for further studies abroad, for study/research periods, and other project type activities or job positions, to name just a few. The most frequent purpose of the first LRs was to recommend students to become an *au pair* in the UK or Ireland; it was only later when the education and labour markets became more open and international that they started to apply for graduate studies in English-speaking countries or for more academic positions. It often happened that many staff members, even more experienced ones, were not quite sure what the genre of LRs entails and what kind of attitude they are supposed to take, as it is not a genre included in academic writing classes, and so academics do not normally get specific training on how to write a LR. *English in Today's Research World: A Writing Guide* by Swales & Feak [2000: 273-282] is a valuable exception of a textbook that offers information on letters of recommendation (along with other open and occluded genres) based on their long experience from working with graduate students.

A unique comparative study of LRs from four different regions by Precht [1998], however, showed similarities cross-culturally, which may be the result of an increasing number of web pages offering advice on *How to write a recommendation letter*. But also some significant cross-cultural differences were found in the method of support and organizational patterns among the four regions. The structure of all examined LRs respected the generally accepted genre conventions and displayed the typical *introduction/body/ conclusion* format with the introduction stating purpose in the frame, the body containing the overall evaluation and the context of knowing of the candidate, and the conclusion containing predictions of his/her success.

Precht [1998: 259] identified four patterns in the analyzed regional LRs: Topical Personal Endorsement (the American letters), Topical Factual Endorsements (the German letters), Topical Evaluative Endorsements (the British letters) and Narrative Accounts of Achievements (the Eastern European letters). Typical features of Eastern European LRs were narrative style, the letter rarely announcing the intention of the writer and the purpose statement often being obscure. On the other hand, the context within which the writer knows the candidate is always described. The evaluation was based on the contextualizing statements and supported by storytelling, and the predictions function as a kind of summary of the narrative that precedes it.

The narrative, chronological style can be explained by regional traditions (the same is true of Curriculum Vitae). The high frequency of the missing purpose may be the lack of information on the part of the applicant; as sometimes they expect a more general LR for *To Whom it May Concern* (personal experience), which may not be very impressive to evaluation committee members. LRs represent a genre that is worth greater study and further consideration because different cultural

background and inappropriate writing strategies caused by cross-cultural differences may result in the failure of the applicant to be successful. The problem is that LRs represent a genre that is occluded, not meant for public access, the information is confidential, and thus it is difficult to compile a corpus. In addition to that, LRs written by Slovak recommenders are distributed by the applicants to different institutions all over the world and do not concentrate on the local institutions.

#### **d. Submission letters (SLs)**

Submission letters are also known as ‘letter of transmittal’ or ‘cover’ letters or ‘covering’ letters (a slightly wider meaning and use) accompanying an article submission.

They represent one of the genres that are not visible, open to the public, but typically hidden. It is not surprising that there are numerous web pages offering subject specific templates of submission letters for downloading, but they tend to focus more on poetry, fiction, music demo tapes and related genres.

SLs can be considered a minority genre for a Slovak academic, even if publishing in English. Nevertheless, I have decided to include it in the discussion of occluded genres in the academy because in the words of Swales it is typically “hidden ... from the public gaze” [1996: 46] and because I believe that each piece of information may come useful to novice writers and young researchers, but also to less experienced non-native speakers of English from our part of Europe, who try to find their place in the growing and competitive Anglophone research world.

Swales [1996: 50] identified ten elements that were found in his corpus of SLs written both by native and non-native speakers. The examples are quoted in full, as one normally does not have an opportunity to read SLs (as an occluded genre) as was the case of the author, who has been a well-known editor for many years. The typical moves were:

1. *Submission* (Please find enclosed ...)
2. *Commentary on the paper* (An earlier version was presented at ...)
3. *Request for response* (I would appreciate an early reply)
4. *Advocacy for paper* (I believe the paper is relevant to ESP because...)
5. *Bio-data* (I am an assistant professor at ...)
6. *Networking* (Prof. Jones suggested that I send this paper to your journal)
7. *No other publication plans* (The enclosed paper is not being considered by any other journal)
8. *Address/mail issues* (As the university mail is unreliable please use my home address for correspondence)
9. *Offer by author to revise* (I will be happy to make any changes that...)
10. *Editor invites to revise* (Please make any corrections you think necessary)

Different editors and members of different disciplinary communities would probably express different opinions on the above list. Generally the information

offered in the SL is accepted positively, unless the tone is too pushy. According to Swales, for example, it is preferred not to use the 'pressure tactics' in (3) when using the business letter formula containing 'early' or 'soon', impressive bio-data are not necessary as a short biographical statement is usually published with the article. Interestingly though he admits that 'The one exception to this might be if it is the author's first attempt at publication in a refereed journal; in this case the letter could mention this fact in the hopes that it might create a sympathetic – and perhaps nostalgic – gleam in the editor's eye.' [55].

The original suggestion was that NNS due to little experience and cross-cultural difference may be less successful than NS. The final comment on the correlation between the type of SL and the author's origin was reassuring, the proportion of successful submissions was 4 NNS to 5 NS.

### **e) Conclusion**

The category of support genres covers genres that are usually occluded from the public record. Graduate students and staff encounter them and they serve as genres supporting their professional career. The paper is not meant to be a guidebook and the description does not want to be prescriptive. It is an attempt to give a brief account of the repertoire of some genres of academic discourse written in English with special attention being paid to the genres used in Slovak higher education environment. The suggested list does not claim to be definite. Genres are dynamic and subject to change in specific rhetorical situations. The genre phenomenon clearly needs further elaboration through further empirical study within particular contexts.

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### **Summary**

The article has presented an attempt to provide a brief survey of support genres of written academic discourse as identified in the context of a Slovak university in the era of globalization of higher education. The complex nature of academic work and the academic profession has been examined, and the most frequent genres that are usually occluded from the public record have been identified. They include genres such as curriculum vitae, letter of application and letter of recommendation. Some cross-cultural differences resulting from different academic and cultural traditions and conventions have also been noted.

## **TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE FIELD OF GEOGRAPHY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Knowledge of foreign languages is the fundamental condition of education and ability to succeed in the contemporary world of science and technology. Contemporary tendencies in foreign language teaching prefer active and independent language users, who are able to work (and face and cope with hindrances) with any language style, either the style of general language or scientific, administrative and literary language. Students/future specialists and specialists professionals probably have to face this reality most and continuously, and the experience says all of them appreciate having a good command of oral as well as written forms of the language to share their ideas and opinions without obstacles, which foreign languages can cause. For this reason specific language communication inevitably features among the instruments a good expert should master. The language communication teaching programme (English for Specific Purposes) presented here – language communication teaching programme for students, research and science specialists in the field of Geography and Regional Development (GRD) carried out at the Institute of Language Competencies at Prešov University in Prešov, Slovakia – is provided for those above-mentioned language users who intend to study, publish and give lectures in English language in the field of geography and regional development (GRD). The objective of the