Genres, Self-presentation, and Manipulation in Discourse

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1.2　New rhetoric

Disciplinary background:

- Classical rhetoric

- Literary studies

- Communication studies

The „New Rhetoric" Approach:

- Caroline Miller (1994)

- Charles Bazermann (1988)

- Joan Berkenkotter & Thomas Huckin (1995)

- David Russell (1997)

Genre:

- Purposeful, typified social action (genres as forms of life, Bazerman 1988)

- Evolved as temporarily stable yet flexible response to recurring rhetorical situations (exigencies)

- Focus of historical contingency (kairos) and cultural and historical situatedness of genres

- Not necessarily a linguistic entity: „a social construct that regularizes communication, interaction, and relations" (Bazerman 1988, 62)

- Tied to social practices and „communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991)

Advantages:

- Meticulous ethnographic investigation of situational and historical contexts of genre use, genre socialisation processes of newcomers, and genre emergence (Kairos as a configuration of contextual factors and actors' dispositions)

Problems:

- Lack of a theoretically refined, systematic inventory for investigating semiotic/ linguistic properties of genres

- No sufficient theoretical solution for the problem of relating micro-level everyday genre practices to meso- and macro-level contexts of complex societies (focus on micro-level practices).

1.3 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Background:

- Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Main proponents:

- (Ruqaiya Hasan)

- James R. Martin

- David Rose

- and may more

Basic concepts – central theoretical notions:

- The three metafunctions (of language):

    - Ideational metafunction: language as representation (processes and partici-pants)

    - Interpersonal metafunction: language as relation (mood, modality etc.)

    - Textual metafunction: language as a semiotic mode (theme – rheme)

- Generalization of metafunctional organization: each semiotic system is structured along these three metafunctions (Martin 1992)

- Metafunctions are realized through systematic choices at different planes of the se-miotic system

Basic concepts – language and context:

- Context of culture (realizes)

- Context of situation (realizes)

- Language as a „social semiotic" (Halliday 1978):

    - Context: content form

    - Language: expression form

    - Connotative semiotic (Hjelmslev 1961): content form and expression form are different semiotic systems

    - Denotative semiotic (Hjelmslev 1961): content form and expression form within one semiotic system ($\rightarrow$ Saussurean sign conception)

Register & Genre Theory (RGT, Martin 1992 et al.):

- Context of culture $\rightarrow$ system of „genres": recurrent socially meaningful, structured, purpose-oriented activity (things get done through the use of language)

- Context of situation $\rightarrow$ „Register" varies along three dimensions (characterize each type of situation):

- Field (e.g. situation typical topics)

- Tenor (e.g. situation typical roles)

- Mode (e.g. situation typical comm. modes)

- → Realized through language

1.4 Register & Genre Theory (RGT, Martin 1992 et al.):

Advantages:

- Provides systematic and highly differentiated methodology for investigating linguistic properties of genres (but not of contexts): Genre stages identified by changes in metafunctional realizations

Problems:

- „Genre" as an abstract concept at the level of culture vs.

- „Genre" as a mundane typified context-bound semiotic activity → problem of circularity

- Big (theoretical) gap between „context of situation" and „context of culture" (like in New Rhetoric)

1.5 Swales' ESP approach (move-analysis)

Background:

- EAP

- ESP

Main proponents:

- John Swales

- Ulla Connor

- Anna Mauranen

- and scholars from all over the world

Basic concepts:

- Discourse community:

  - Common public goal(s)

  - Mechanisms of intra-community communication

  - Uses these mechanisms for mutual information and feedback

  - Owns one or more genres for reaching its goal(s)

  - Specific vocabulary

  - Threshold of participation

- Which example(s) of a discourse community can you think of?

Basic conceptions:

- Genre:

  - Class of communicative events sharing a common set of communicative goals

  - Realizations differ in degree of prototypicality

  - Structured into

    - Moves and

    - Phases

  - Moves and phases are defined via their communicative function within the genre structure ($\leftrightarrow$ SFL, see above)

  - Characteristics of linguistic realizations of moves and phases represent the last step of a genre analysis.

  - Members of a discourse community have their own terminology for their genres

Advantages:

- Easy to use apply

- Very practice oriented

Disadvantages/ problems:

- Strong focus on ESP/EAP and institutional settings

- Theoretically not very refined

- Identification of moves and phases via communicative function is quite intuitive, linguistic features of genres not in focus

1.6 Bhatia's integrative model

Bhatia (1993, 2004)

Basic intention/ theoretical background(s):

- Integration of New Rhetoric, SFL, and Swales' approach with Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Basic concepts:

- Four perspectives of genre analysis:

    - Textual

    - Ethnographic

    - Socio-cognitive

    - Socio-critical

The textual perspective deals with:

- Compilation of textual corpora

- Investigation of lexico-grammatical features

- Rhetorical features

- Intertextual/ interdiscursive features

- Generic conventions and practices

The ethnographic perspective deals with:

- Sites of engagement in relevant interactions

- Practices

- Social structures, interactants, history, norms and values of the community using a genre

- Physical settings

- Modes of genre realization and communication

- Developmental aspects of a genre (emergence vs. implementation)

The socio-cognitive perspective deals with:

- Disciplinary cultures

- Patterns of audience reception

- Genre knowledge and expectations

- Knowledge of rhetorical strategies

- Patterns of interdiscursivity

The socio-critical perspective deals with:

- Patterns of language, ideology, and power

- Interaction of language and social structure

- Discourses and social practices

- Relations between micro- and macro-level processes and structures

- Cross-cultural constraints on genres and genre use

Advantages:

- Multi-faceted model which allows to analyse all relevant aspects of a genre and its use

- Provides a „toolbox" for differentiated investigations

Disadvantages/ problems:

- Theoretical arbitrariness

- „Additionalism": no integration of different perspectives

1.7 Synopsis

Genre:

- abstract, typified (recognizable), structured, goal oriented social process realized by at least one semiotic system and used by a social group

Functional discourse unit (Gruber 2015):

- Shows all characteristics of a genre

- Can occur as an independent utterance/ message in discourse

- But: in the majority of cases it is realized as part of a complex macro-genre or as an embedded genre (cf. below; e.g. the "follow-up" genre in parliamentary debates).

- Genres are abstract entities which are realized in concrete communication situations (cf. below). Therefore, each genre realization combines genre typical with situation specific features.

- Generic structures (moves and phases) reflect their social purpose/ goal

- Genres have three relevant aspects:

    - Cognitive (genre knowledge and expectations)

    - Semiotic (semiotic resources involved in production/reception)

    - Social (situational aspects, role relations of involved participants)

- Genres are functionally related to situational/ institutional contexts (registers) which trigger:

    - Participation roles related to a genre (audience design features)

    - Adequate socio-semiotic resources for genre realization (medial affordances)

- Genres realize discourses:

    - Discourse structures social relations and (ideological) patterns of language use at the macro-level of society

- Discourse organizes relation(s) between genres (genre systems and networks etc.)

- Genres are flexible and can be adapted to new communicative situations (exigencies). Therefore, new genres can evolve on the basis of existing ones.

- Genres are learnable. New members of the social group who uses a genre can (explicitly or implicitly) acquire the knowledge necessary for competent use of a genre.

1.8   Additional relevant concepts

Emergence of genres (Østergaard and Bundgaard 2015):

- Starting point: "exigence": communicative problem which needs to be solved

- Interactants check their existing inventory of genres:

    - Adaptation of an existing genre which seems to be suitable and usable

    - Development of a new text/utterance which seems to be usable for solving communicative problem

- Propagation: imitation of successful responses to communicative problem situation → stabilization of generic features

- Constraint: generic characteristics (genre expectations) constrain production of new instances of an genre instantiation (standardization process)

- Modification: communicative situations and genres co-develop; new genres "import" role constellations from their participation framework into institutions

Recontextualization (Bernstein 1996; Linell 1998; van Leeuwen 2008)

- Context: partly outside discourse ("physical, cognitive etc. context"), partly discursive ("co-text")

- Recontextualization: transfer and transformation of "chunks" of discourse from one context to another one:

- • Production of utterance 1: specific context configuration, propositional content, audience design (specific production and reception format) → contextualization of utterance 1

- • Transposition decision to insert an extracted chunk from utterance 1 into new context → governed by communicative intention of utterance 2 with a specific production and reception format which establishes the co(n)-text of extracted part of utterance 1

- • Extraction of discursive chunk (from u1) produced in context 1: propositional content, expressions, arguments, structural properties, aspects of audience design → "de-contextualization" of part of utterance 1

- • Recontextualization: insertion of extracted chunk into new context → recontextualization effects

- Recontextualization effects:

  - • Loss of meaning aspects from context 1

  - • Addition of meaning aspects in context 2 (Bernstein 1996, Linell 1998)

- Levels of recontextualization:

  - • Intratextual: negotiation of utterance meaning in interaction; thematic development in written discourse

  - • Intertextual (Fairclough 1992): re-use of textual material in subsequent texts

  - • Interdiscursive (Fairclough 1992): re-use of structural aspects (genre properties) in subsequent discourse

- Forms of recontextualization:

  - • Intertextual relations

  - • Hybridity

Intertextuality (Fairclough 1992):

- Forms of discourse representation (intertextual relations):

- Direct

- Indirect

- Content oriented

- Structure related: transfer of genre features (Allusions, hybridity, interdiscursivity)

Hybridity (Mäntynen & Shore 2014)

- Sequential intertextuality: snippets of different genres (genre features) within one text (e.g. public relations discourse)

- Genre embedding: representing a complete instantiation of one genre in the instantiation of another genre (e.g. in foreign language textbooks but also in social media discourse → "sharing" of content)

- Genre appropriation: a text appropriates a generic structure which does not fit to its content/ purpose (e.g. parody)

- Products of hybridization:

  - Complex genres (macrogenres, Martin and Rose 2008): embedding of genres into another genre (e.g. narratives as parts of argumentative genres; textbooks containing different genres; content sharing)

  - Super-genre: a genre consisting of a couple of (subordinate) subgenres (cf. the distinction between "Texttyp" and "Textsorte" in German genre theories)

  - Genre chains: a set of interdependent genres with a fixed order (e.g. all genres used during the submission, reviewing, and publishing process of an academic paper)

  - Genre networks: interrelated genre without fixed order (e.g. all genres involved in writing an academic paper)

2   GENRES AND NEW MEDIA

General characteristic of traditional linguistic genre theories:

- Focus on actors (users), their communicative aims, and textual features

- Neglect of media and their affordances.

2.1   Medium: Two approaches:

The differentiating approach (Holly 1997, 2011; Dürscheid 2005; Gruber 2008):

- "Medium": array of technological "hard" factors which allow production, transmission and (sometimes) storage of utterances

- "Communicative form": socio-cultural semiotic practices which a medium enables (affords) users to produce; a communicative form may "host" several genres (depending on users' communicative goals)

The integrative (holistic) approach (Bateman 2017; Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiippala 2017; Schneider 2017; Gruber 2019):

- Medium as a structured combination of semiotic modes, material constraints/ affordances (i.e. technological factors in a very broad sense) and forms of semiotic meaning constitution

- Stresses the interdependence of (technological aspects of) media and semiotic characteristics of messages/utterances they afford; media foreground certain semiotic options and background others for certain groups of users (i.e. message producers and recipients)

- Media communication involves 3 actants (Latour 2005): message producer, medium, message recipient

2.2   Media affordance:

- Which *communicative features* does a medium *provide* for a *specific user group* and which ones does it *inhibit*? → enabling and constraining affordances

Media affordances can pertain to different levels of communication:

- General communicative framework of medium: synchronous vs. asynchronous communication (e.g. chat vs. e-mail), symmetric vs. asymmetric relations between users (e.g. Twitter as an asymmetric framework), message persistence (storability and retrievability)

- Properties of message design: quoting, sharing, commenting, combination of semiotic modes

Media affordances interact with:

- Users' communicative aims (interact with and/or triggered by enabling affordances)

- Patterns of usage: activities made possible by media affordances

- User adaptation: user activities to circumvent constraining affordances

A rough classification scheme for genres in the new media (Herring 2013):

- Familiar (reproduced) genres/ practices: already established genres/ discourse practices which have been used before in other settings (even in CMC) (e.g.: newspaper/ journal articles or subscription forms)

- Reconfigured genres/ practices: established genres which are adapted to the affordances of newly established media platforms (e.g.: usage of @name convention for addressing others in different forms of synchronous and asynchronous Internet discussions and chats)

- Emergent genres/ practices: genuinely "new" genres/practices which emerge as a result of media affordances, e.g. memes, "donation alert messages" on twitch (Recktenwald 2018)

- But: focus should not be put on formal discourse properties but on functional aspects of communicative practices when applying this classification scheme (e.g. intertextual and recontextualization practices)

- Genre in new media discourse: focus on social purpose and activity aspects (and not on linguistics features) + on interaction between media affordances and users' communicative aims

3 SELF PRESENTATION IN PUBLIC

Basic concepts:

- Participation framework (Goffman, Dynel)

- Positioning in interaction (Davis and Harré, du Bois, Weizman)

- Enregistration of social styles (Agha)

- Participation framework (Goffman 1981; Dynel 2011, 2014)

Production roles (Goffman 1981)

- Author: the one who produced the wording of an message

- Principal: the one whose position is reflected in the message

- Animator: the one wo actually proclaims the message

- Broadcaster: the account distributing a message (Draucker & Collister, 2015)

Reception roles

- Ratified participants:

  - Addressed participants

  - Non-addressed participants

  - Third party: indirectly addressed (non) participants (Dynel, 2014)

- Non-ratified participants (Overhearers):

  - Bystanders: non-ratified participants whom the animator is aware of

  - Eavesdroppers: non-ratified participants whom the animator is not aware of

  - Meta-participants (Kadar & Haugh, 2013): not addressed participants viewing an interaction on TV or social media (recipients of recontextualization practices → sharing, etc.)

Typology of third party participants (Dynel, 2014: 33ff.)

- Third party with equal rights to addressee: 2 or more recipients of whom only 1 is addressed but the others have no difficulties in participating

- Third party as primary listener next to a dummy listener (e.g. interpreters)

- Third party as spectator or referee (e.g. political discussions on TV)

- Third party as seemingly neglected (but tacitly acknowledged as hearer, e.g. parliamentary heckling)

- Targeted overhearer is made a ratified third party

Positioning in interaction:

- Other-positioning

- Self-positioning

- Direct positioning (use of indexical expressions)

- Indirect positioning (stance taking practices, alignment/ disalignment with previous statements via resonating utterances (du Bois 2007), intertextuality, recontextualization of utterances/ utterance parts)

Enregistration of social styles (Agha 2005, 2007):

- Semiotic object becomes an "emblem" if

  - Some perceivable semiotic thing exists

  - a social persona (a role) who is associated with this thing

  - Someone (or a social group) perceives the combination of a) and b) as an "emblem"

- Emblems are "indexes" in the sense of Peircean semiotics

- Examples:

  - Somebody with a Mohawk haircut, piercings in ears, nose and lips → we see a "punk"

  - Somebody speaks Tyrolean dialect and wears traditional Austrian lederhosen → we see a "genuine Austrian"

Enregistration of speaking styles in (political) discourse:

- Enregistration of a style as an active process via

- Other positioning utterances ("you speak like a …"; "this is the style of …", "this is the way the … did it")

- Self positioning utterances ("we are the new …"; wearing of historically charged symbols)

→ Invocation of discourses and discourse positions via enregistered emblems

4   MANIPULATION IN DISCOURSE

Manipulation: "**4.** The action or an act of managing or directing a person, etc., esp. in a skilful manner; the exercise of subtle, underhand, or devious influence or control over a person, organization, etc.; interference, tampering." (O.E.D., emphasis added)

Persuasion: "**1. a.** The action or an act of persuading or attempting to persuade; the addressing of arguments or appeals to a person in order to induce cooperation, submission, or agreement; the presenting of persuasive reasoning or compelling arguments." (O.E.D., emphasis added)

Argumentation: " **1.** The action or operation of inferring a conclusion from propositions premised; methodical employment or presentation of arguments; logical or formal reasoning." (O.E.D.)

to convince: "**a.** To cause (a person) to admit, as established to his satisfaction, that which is advanced in argument; to bring to acknowledge the truth *of*; to satisfy or persuade by argument or evidence. In *passive*, To be brought to, or to have, a full conviction; to be firmly persuaded. […]" (O.E.D., emphasis added)

German: "überzeugen" (to convince) vs. "überreden" (to persuade)

Why manipulation, why discourse?

- Prevalence of symbolic power in late modernity (Giddens, Fairclough)
- → need for gaining public approval for politicians' actions

Additional relevant concepts:

- Power (as a bidirectional relationship)
- (Potential) difference of opinions on an issue of public interest/ concern
- Social tensions around such an issue
- Audience design of utterances in a manipulative discourse

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