

Educational Genres in Eastern Europe: A Comparison of the Genres in the Humanities Departments of three Countries¹

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Abstract

The intercultural study of genres provides an opportunity not only to gain an understanding of the differences in writing cultures but also to sharpen the view on what is particular for each learning context. As little previous research has undertaken systematic comparisons of genre systems at European universities, we collected data on educational genres used in writing from the Humanities departments of two universities in Eastern European countries (Romania and Ukraine) and one in a Southeastern European country (Republic of Macedonia). A questionnaire with listed genre names was distributed at the three universities to assess the importance and the perceptions of academic genres in the respective cultures. Open questions were used to validate the results and gather hypotheses on the meaning of the mentioned genres. Results show differences in the frequencies of genre use, which, however, do not allow typifying differences in the learning/writing cultures. Genres are labelled differently and emerge from different traditions but seem to resemble a similar pool of genres in each of the studied countries.

Introduction

In academic contexts, genres are structuring learning situations in which reading and writing is involved. Genres like the essay, the seminar paper or the doctoral thesis are important elements of academic cultures or writing cultures (Chitez and Kruse 2012), which may persist over long periods of time and define mutual expectations in learning contexts. While it may be assumed that a few

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nationally important genres characterize a certain writing culture, new studies demonstrate that there are rather hundreds of genres in use (Nesi and Gardner 2012 and Kruse and Chitez 2012), which fulfil different purposes for teaching and learning.

Most studies analysing educational genres focus on genres or genre systems in particular countries like, for instance, Nesi and Gardner (2012) for the UK, Donahue (2002, 2008) for France, Gruber et al. (2006) and Steinhoff (2007) for the German-speaking countries. There are almost no studies comparing educational genres and genre use and practice across national education systems. Kruse and Chitez (2012) used a genre mapping approach to study genres used at teacher education universities of the three language regions of Switzerland (French, Italian, German) and found more similarities across the three languages than differences. Considering the roughly 50 countries with as many major languages in Europe, we wonder whether we find the same genres in higher education or locally determined preferences across cultures and languages. In this study, we examine genres in three countries from Eastern Europe in which little or no genre research has been done so far. We feel that there is no right order in which to proceed with intercultural research but that we need practical models to start with.

The aim of the study is to compare repertoires of educational genres in three countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. By using a questionnaire designed for intercultural studies of writing, we gathered data in the Humanities departments of the universities in the Republic of Macedonia, in Romania and Ukraine. The study responds to the growing need for a better understanding of the writing and textual practices in different European countries, which is triggered, among other reasons, by the increasing international educational mobility and Europe's attempts to create a Shared European Higher Education Area (see for instance EUA 1999 and Surssock and Smidt 2010). Learning mobility makes it necessary to prepare students for writing in different contexts and in different languages. Students cannot assume that the kind of papers they are acquainted with, for instance, in Ukrainian higher education will allow them to write successfully at a university in France or Germany - even if they can submit their papers in English. We hope, therefore, (1) to raise awareness and initiate a debate on the intercultural aspects of genre use at (South)Eastern European universities, and (2) help the participating universities and other universities of the region to learn more about their own writing cultures. Our research questions are: (1) Do the Humanities departments of the three universities rely on a comparable pool of educational genres? (2) Are there differences in the quantity of certain, internationally renowned genres between the universities? (3) Are there genres specific to some of the universities and how can we interpret such genres?

Theoretical Framework

Two lines of theory connect in our study. One is genre theory, the other intercultural research on writing. We will shortly sketch both before we look at their intersection. Wherever language is used, genres are structuring verbal interaction, both oral and written, and some understanding of genres is a prerequisite for actively or passively (receptively) participating in a culture. Genre theory has generally recognized the socially constructed and community-related nature of genres, even if it has been developed in different contexts and with different terminologies, as Hyon (1996) summarizes.

Each of the three most prominent approaches to genre stresses its slightly different features. While the US-based rhetorical approach emphasizes the social context of genre and its inclusion in action systems (Bazerman 1994, Miller 1984 and Russell 1997), the ESP approach stresses the communicative purpose of genres to which the rhetorical and linguistic structure of the genre is related (Swales 1990, 2004 and Hyland 2003). The approach from Systemic Functional Linguistics sees genre as 'a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture' (Martin 1984: 25) and underscores the importance of text purposes as well as of generic text types, such as, for example, narration (Martin and Rose 2008). Though seemingly different in emphasis, all the three approaches converge in the idea that genres cannot be explained by simply classifying texts, but that they are to be studied within their social, professional, educational and cultural contexts.

Understanding the challenges university students and their teachers might encounter in learning and teaching writing, literacy scholars have been examining the genre-based pedagogy and explored the need for educators to apply the concept of genre to writing instruction. A genre-based approach is seen as a way to support the academic literacy development of both L1 writers (e.g., Devitt 2004 and Johns 2008) and L2 writers (e.g., Gebhard and Harman 2011, Hyland 2003, 2007 and Tardy 2006).

In the field of intercultural (former contrastive) rhetoric (Connor 1996, 2002, 2011 and Leki 1991) it is also emphasized that writing in universities is strongly influenced by genres and, therefore, comparisons should be carried out for certain genres, not for writing in general. While initially contrastive rhetoric focused on English texts written by writers from different cultures, today such studies compare L1 texts from different cultures and/or of different languages by multilingual corpora (see Leki 1991, Siepmann 2006, for reviews).

An approach to studying educational genres can possibly be based on the understanding of the differences in national traditions of organizing education, as acknowledged by Russell and Foster (2002). Much more than by a particular language, writing is determined by matters including the effects of educational ideologies and traditions, the type of control a country exerts on the educational system, conceptions of literacy development, the involvement of students into disciplinary conversation, the assessment procedures, language policy and the degree of explicitness of teaching writing. With the Bologna process, intended to reduce the traditional diversity of European universities, the national education systems are under heavy pressure to meet these requirements of standardization and unification of degree programs, graduation requirements, academic value systems, selection criteria for careers, learning procedures, curricula, and connections to professional fields. All of this may influence the repertoire of genres used for teaching at universities.

There is little knowledge about genres in an intercultural perspective. It is implicitly assumed that genres are fairly stable across cultures and that universities in different cultures use similar sets of genres for teaching. Most studies analysing genres in higher education have focused on single cultures; for example, Nesi and Gardner (2012) have conducted the most systematic study of genre mapping so far by collecting and analysing a corpus of 2761 student papers from English universities, which they first reduced to 90 different genres and then to 13 genre families. We do not know, unfortunately, how much their results apply to other cultures and whether we have to expect similar or completely different genre systems there. We have to be aware not only of 'false friends' in genre terminologies (Donahue 2008) but also of completely different genres or genres that are missing.

Context

The three countries we studied are similar in that they were in the communist sphere of influence, although Soviet influence was less strong in former Yugoslavia to which Macedonia belonged than in Romania and Ukraine (the latter, in fact, was part of the Soviet Union until 1991). The three universities of Skopje, Timișoara and L'viv are all multi-disciplinary universities with a similar profile of disciplines and degree structures offering BA/MA programs and doctoral studies. At the time when the data were gathered, all three countries had roughly 20 years of independent development and all of them are currently re-organizing their higher education systems according to the values of the European Higher Education Area, i.e. the Bologna Process. The transformation processes in all three countries are equally limited by tight budgets, high numbers of students and the high teaching load of faculty.

The Republic of Macedonia, which gained independence from former Yugoslavia in 1991, is still a country in the process of transition and democratization, with a firm direction towards EU accession, which means coming closer to the European standards, not only in the areas of economy and law, but in education as well. In Macedonia, if we compare the foreign language instruction in the late 1970s with the instruction in 2000s, data suggest that French was the most widely taught foreign language 40 years ago. English is currently the most dominant foreign language both in school and in the business sphere. Academic writing practices have been changed and are oriented towards the Anglo-Saxon writing styles preferred in prestigious journals, most of which follow APA or MLA standards of presenting academic research. Dimova (2005) explored the 'penetration of English,' which substituted

Russian, in the new democratic countries rising in and after 1989. This new influence seemed to be occurring simultaneously with the opening of these countries towards the Western world's economy. She argued that most of the studies focused on the status of English in the countries of the Eastern bloc and scarce research was done about the influence of English in former Yugoslav republics (187).

The socio-historical and educational context is similar in Ukraine – a rather new (from a historical perspective) state with an educational system which has significantly differed from the Western one up till now. For instance, Ukrainian academic institutions have only relatively recently started to grant Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Traditionally, the dominant type of higher educational institution in Ukraine was a classic, German-type university oriented at equipping researchers, scholars and analysts with wide background knowledge rather than at producing pragmatic and skilful practitioners. However, current socio-political processes stimulate the interest of Ukrainian educators in new pedagogical approaches and learning tools and domains, e.g., in literacy support and teaching writing. These new influences are tightly connected with the intensive teaching and learning of English as a lingua franca of the globalised world.

The Romanian educational system, historically, was modelled mainly following French and German examples, with the French Napoleonic model stronger represented here than in the other Eastern European countries owing to the country's Romance heritage (Charle 2004). The French tradition maintained its influence in terms of genres and attitudes to writing even after 1945, when higher education, along with the rest of society, was transformed under Soviet influence. In the years after 1989 Romania, like Macedonia and Ukraine, has also been undergoing a rapid process of transition, with English having an ever-increasing impact on writing required at university level. All three countries are in a similar situation of coping with the post-communist adaptation and re-orientation along the demands of modernising and internationalising their higher education systems.

Method

Instruments and data collection process

Three universities were involved in the data collection process: Ivan Franko National University of L'viv, Ukraine, West University of Timișoara, Romania, and Ss Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Macedonia. The Humanities departments of all three universities are comparable in terms of the limited institutional support for writing. Only recently have structured writing courses been introduced in these three universities, but mainly in the English departments.

The major research tool was a questionnaire distributed to 381 students: 151 Macedonian, 117 Romanian and 113 Ukrainian BA, MA and PhD students. The student questionnaire from the COST Action 'European Research Network on Learning to Write Effectively' developed by Kruse, Castelló and Chitez (in prep.) was translated from English into the three languages: Macedonian, Romanian, and Ukrainian. The questionnaire consists of 132 questions divided in eight sections including questions about writing practices in various courses, student perceptions of writing, writing processes in which students are engaged, the frequency of genres produced, conceptions of good writing and other study skills related to writing. In this paper, we evaluate only the questions regarding educational genres taught and practiced at the three universities. Students were asked to name the text that they were asked to write most recently, and to provide a short description of it. Then, they were given a list of educational genres and were asked to report on how often they were required to write them, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'always' to 'never.' They then had the opportunity to report on other genres they used, and how often.

Data collection in Macedonia was performed in the period from April 2012 until April 2013. Romanian and Ukrainian questionnaires were distributed in April-May 2012. Response rates can only be calculated for the Romanian sample (6.7%). Data collection procedures in the three universities differed slightly due to the local conditions. As electronic email lists were not available in Ukraine and Macedonia, the researchers from these countries collected contact information by directly asking students whether they were willing to participate or asked colleagues to help them distribute the survey to students enrolled in their classes. In Romania, questionnaires were distributed to students using personal email lists collected by the faculty as part of student registration procedures. Statistical

evaluation was done with SPSS software. We restricted ourselves to a purely descriptive evaluation and did not calculate significances. To indicate frequencies we used the sum scores of the answers 'often' and 'very often'.

The translation of the questionnaires posed problems, some of which we were aware of during the preparation process for the data collection, while others only became apparent at a later stage. Some of the difficulties were related to the ambiguity of the names of certain genres in the three countries and elsewhere (e.g., *essay*). Some of the terminology of the original questionnaire had to be explained, since the genres were likely to be unfamiliar to the respondents. For example, *protocols*, a frequently encountered genre in German-speaking countries, would have been opaque to most Romanian students, and it was consequently translated as *protocoale/rezumatetele lecțiilor* (meaning *summaries of lessons*). Other difficulties were related to the different traditions in the three countries' educational systems. A *seminar paper*, for instance, is understood differently depending on what a 'seminar' is in the different cultures: a specialised course (in the US or UK), a class that involves writing a paper or project as opposed to a lecture (in German-speaking countries), or a small-group practical class which is part of a course that also includes lectures (in countries such as Romania and Ukraine).

Participants

Demographic data showed that the average age of the participants per country was 23 (Romania), 23 (Macedonia) and 20 (Ukraine). The majority of the students were undergraduates. Regarding gender, the majority of the students were female (91.5% in Romania, 74.8% in Macedonia, and 63.7% in Ukraine). There were representatives from various disciplines including Languages and Literatures, History, Theology, Journalism, Philosophy, Economics, Sociology, Cultural studies, and Arts. In the Romanian and Macedonian samples, around one third of the participants were English majors. The L1 of the participants were Romanian, Macedonian and Ukrainian, though there were some minority groups whose L1 was Russian, Albanian, French, or Hungarian.

Results

Results on genre use from the questionnaires showed many similarities in terms of most frequently practiced genres in all three countries. For several genres, the commonly accepted names in the Anglo-Saxon tradition seemed to be unclear for the participants and specific to the institutional cultures at the universities in Romania, Ukraine and Macedonia. Table 1 presents the frequencies of 14 educational genres per country.

Table 1: Comparison: Percentage of genres mentioned to be used 'often' or 'very often'

| How often do you write these genres? (answers for 'often' + 'very often') | Macedonia (%) | Ukraine (%) | Romania (%) | Number of mentions for all three countries |
|---|---------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| Notes during lectures | 68 | 84 | 91 | 243 |
| Seminar papers (on theoretical or empirical topics) | 36 | 34 | 45 | 115 |
| Research papers | 25 | 50 | 22 | 97 |
| Reflections (on personal experiences) | 33 | 41 | 12 | 86 |
| Technical reports | 13 | 20 | 3 | 36 |
| Summaries | 22 | 12 | 23 | 57 |
| Protocols (minutes of lessons) | 21 | 2 | 9 | 32 |
| Internship reports | 11 | 6 | 12 | 29 |
| Proposals | 32 | 8 | 13 | 53 |
| Essays | 59 | 45 | 38 | 142 |
| Narrative or creative texts | 27 | 20 | 21 | 68 |
| Log books or learning diaries | 5 | 11 | 3 | 19 |
| Written in-class exams | 14 | 56 | 54 | 124 |
| Journalistic texts | 17 | 20 | 7 | 44 |

The most frequent genres in all three countries were *notes from lectures* and *written in-class exams*. This can be explained by the similarities in the systems of education in all three countries, which traditionally were teacher-oriented, with a teacher giving a lecture in front of a large auditorium and students rarely participating. In the past students were, and sometimes still are expected to take notes and reproduce the material taught when taking the final exam. In these three universities, undergraduate students rarely get a final grade by submitting a paper at the end of a course, which is common practice in other educational systems. Above 50% of the Ukrainian and Romanian students reported they had written in-class exams. The number was lower for Macedonian students, which may be explained by the fact that the word *exam* was not translated in the Macedonian version of the questionnaire, and so the students probably misinterpreted this genre.

The results show that in all three countries between 30% and 45% of the papers written by students were *seminar papers* (Macedonia 35.8%; Ukraine 34.5%, and Romania 45.3%). The genre again may have been understood differently by participants coming from different countries. In Macedonia, a seminar paper is produced by students prior to graduation on a choice of any major subjects they took during their studies. In Romania, seminar papers are integral parts of courses, which often consist of a series of seminars and a series of lectures, with the lectures giving theoretical input, and seminars reserved for practical applications or discussions. Seminar papers can be written and submitted at the

end of the semester, defended orally in class, or defended orally and then submitted as written papers as well. In this sense, the genre of seminar paper sometimes overlaps with that of the *referat* (*реферат*) in Ukrainian education, where a seminar paper means an extended literature compilation on a certain topic. Thus, in some countries a seminar paper is the product of lectures, in others of tutorials, and might go along with different requirements, both in terms of writing process and in terms of content.

Fifty percent of the Ukrainian students reported they had written *research papers*, while the percentages are much lower for the Macedonian students (25%) and Romanian students (22%). This significant difference can be explained by the fact that the Ukrainian research team translated 'research papers' functionally as *course papers*. In Ukraine, students are required to produce one to two research papers per year. Moreover, the Ukrainian sample included more PhD students than the Macedonian and Romanian samples. It is possible that the Macedonian and Romanian students understood the genres *seminar paper* and *research paper* as the same genre, although for the Macedonian students a research paper may also have been interpreted as a research-based argumentative essay.

As for *reflections*, the Ukrainian students (41%) reported they had written this genre more often than the Macedonian (32%) and Romanian students (12%). The relatively small percentage of reflective writing in the Romanian sample is somewhat surprising, given the fact that some of the respondents were teacher trainees, whose assignments we would have expected to include reflective texts. In Ukraine, students who major in Culture and Arts usually are exposed to reflective writing. The majority of the Macedonian students have not practiced this genre so far, except when students are required to evaluate a course, and some write short paragraph reflections on a course or on their development as writers.

Twenty-three percent of the Romanian students reported they had written *summaries*, which is very close to the Macedonian results (22.5%), but stands in contrast to only 12% of the Ukrainian students. It is important to mention that for the Ukrainians the terms *literature report*, *referat* and *summary* overlap. Romanian students majoring in English are exposed to summary writing in English language classes, some of which prepare them for the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency. The Macedonian students who major in English and Journalism are specifically trained to write summaries during their undergraduate studies.

Regarding *essays*, a genre that is frequently written besides notes from lectures and written in-class exams, 59.6% of the Macedonian, 44.8% of the Ukrainian and 38.5% of the Romanian students reported they had produced them. As mentioned earlier, 'essay' is a fuzzy term because of its culture-specific connotations and because it is often used as an umbrella term for other genres. In the US tradition it is sometimes understood as a structure with a clear thesis statement, usually with three body paragraphs explaining the controlling ideas/subclaims from the thesis statement, and a conclusion. In the UK, essays are often specified by labels as 'analytic', 'critical', 'expository', or 'narrative' thus allowing for a variety of structures.

The answers to the open-ended questions in our survey showed that the term 'essay' is closely related to specific text types. For example, for the Ukrainian students it is closely related to self-exploration, self-expression, involving writing about patriotism, love or friendship. For the Macedonian participants the term 'essay' can be of different nature – philosophical, critical, argumentative, self-exploratory, a personal narrative, while for the Romanians the term 'essay' can be used interchangeably with other genre names (*seminar paper*, *research paper*, *referat*) to denote different types of text, in addition to the Anglo-Saxon *argumentative essay*.

Proposals are relatively weakly represented in Romania and Ukraine, but not in Macedonia, where students in English need to submit proposals for argumentative papers they write (e.g., *argumentative research-based essays*, *seminar papers*, *diploma paper*).

The answers to the open questions about the most recent paper students had to write, accompanied by a short description of their final written piece, as well as the answers to questions about other genres students produced showed that students from all three universities had problems providing a short description or defining these genres. Some only provided the title or the researched topic, or

provided a long narrative of the writing process they went through from which it was hard to infer what the exact genre was, e.g., 'postcolonialism and globalism', 'Slavic mythology', *програма соціологічного дослідження* ('a program of sociological research'), *prezentarea autorilor emblematici* ('presenting representative authors'), *am încercat să redau cât mai bine informațiile fără detalii foarte amănunțite* ('I tried to render the information as well as I could, without going into a lot of detail'). Under the category of other genres students mentioned other types of writing such as 'poem,' 'novel,' 'grotesque,' 'drawing,' 'short movie', which are not considered academic writing per se. This may have been due to the fact that the question did not specifically ask them to restrict themselves to academic genres.

The answers suggest both that a wide range of text types are used in the classroom, in all probability varying widely from one subject to another and from one individual teacher to another, and that the boundaries among academic and non-academic genres are flexible and not always transparent to students (e.g., 'A list of all irregular verbs in German' was mentioned as the last written text by a Romanian student or 'news' by a Macedonian student). These findings might imply either the lack of a well-established writing tradition, or the fact that the rapid transition taking place in these educational systems generates a particularly eclectic system of genres and writing practices.

Table 2: Genres mentioned in open question ('What was the last paper you had to write?'), Macedonia

| Genres/genre families | Genre names as they appear in the student responses |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Seminar paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>семинарска работа</i> [seminar, term paper] |
| Graduation paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>дипломска работа, дипломски труд</i> [graduation paper submitted on the Bachelor's degree]; <i>магистерска работа</i> [Master's thesis]; |
| Research paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>истражувачка работа, научно-истражувачка работа, истражувачки есеј, истражувачки труд</i> [research article, written piece based on original research] |
| Essay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>есеј</i> [opinion on a literary piece or argumentative essay] |
| Other types of written texts/ tasks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short story • Exam Topic Essay • Business plan • Analysis • One critical method; critique • Paraphrase • Research project • Novel • Critical review; book review • Functional texts (job application letter) • Translation of sentences • Article • Opinion paragraph • Graphic presentation of a topic • Commentary • News • Interview • Report on elections (not a scientific report) |

Tables 2, 3 and 4 give a tentative classification of the responses to the 'last written paper' question by Macedonian, Romanian and Ukrainian students. Genres were classified based on genre names and on the brief description of the genre students were asked to provide. Responses which could not be

classified on the basis of either the name or the description of the genre were disregarded in the Romanian data. In all three countries, the classification was made particularly difficult by the abovementioned vagueness of genre names in students' responses and by the fact that several genres overlap and others share the same name.

Table 3: Genres mentioned in the open question ('What was the last paper you had to write?'), Romania

| Genres/genre families | Genre names as they appear in the student responses |
|--|---|
| Referat/Seminar paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>temă semestrială</i> [semester work]; <i>lucrare de seminar</i> [seminar paper]; <i>proiect</i> [project]; <i>referat</i> [seminar paper]; <i>referat științific</i> [scholarly referat] |
| Essay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>eseu</i> [essay]; <i>text argumentativ</i> [argumentative text]; <i>eseu argumentativ</i> [argumentative essay] |
| Research paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>lucrare de cercetare</i> [research paper]; <i>text științific</i> [scholarly text]; <i>lucrare științifică</i> [scholarly paper]; <i>lucrare pt un colocviu</i> [conference paper]; <i>research paper</i> [in English in the survey response]; <i>lucrare academică</i> [academic paper]; <i>proiect scris – cercetare</i> [written project – research] |
| Shorter texts written to practise professional skills or deepen disciplinary knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>comentariu</i> [commentary]; <i>comentariu pe text</i> [commentary upon a text] • <i>analiză</i> [analysis – e.g. linguistic, grammatical]; • <i>plan de afaceri</i> [business plan] • <i>scurt eseu</i> [short essay]; <i>compunere</i> [composition] • <i>recenzie</i> [review] • <i>traducere</i> [translation] • <i>plan de lecție</i> [lesson plan] |
| Thesis (MA/BA dissertation) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>licență</i> [BA thesis]; <i>lucrare de licență</i> [BA thesis]; <i>disertație</i> [MA dissertation]; <i>lucrare de disertație</i> [dissertation paper] |
| Reflective texts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>free writing</i> [in English in the survey response]; <i>jurnal</i> [diary] |
| Creative texts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>text creativ</i> [creative text] |
| Functional texts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>letter of complaint</i> [in English in the survey response]; <i>scrisoare</i> [letter]; <i>scrisoare de răspuns pentru o adresă</i> [letter of response to a memo]; <i>scrisoare de informare</i> [letter giving information] |

Table 4: Genres mentioned in open question ('What was the last paper you had to write?'), Ukraine

| Genres/genre families | Genre names as they appear in the student responses |
|---|--|
| Summary/Compilation of literature sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>реферат</i> [<i>referat</i>, extended literature compilation; seminar paper]; <i>огляд літератури</i> [literature review]; <i>реферат статті</i> [article summary]; <i>індивідуальна робота</i> [individual written task on a suggested topic]; |
| Course paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>курсова робота</i> [term paper] |
| Graduation paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>дипломна робота</i> [graduation paper submitted on the Specialist's – higher than Bachelor's but lower than Master's – level]; <i>магістерська робота</i> [Master's thesis]; <i>кваліфікаційна робота</i> [paper submitted for fulfilment of qualification requirements] |
| Research paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>наукова стаття</i> [research article, mostly produced by doctoral students]; <i>наукове дослідження</i> [research paper] |
| Essay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>есе, твір</i> [reflexive or argumentative essay] |
| Other types of written texts/ tasks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>контрольна робота</i> [written control-paper]; • <i>портфоліо</i> [portfolio, collection of essays and reviews on a certain topic]; • <i>звіт</i> [report on activities, events, etc.] • <i>презентація, виступ</i> [presentation to be delivered before class]; • <i>творча робота</i> [a piece of creative work] • <i>концепція</i> [elaborated concept of smth.] • <i>рецензія</i> [review of a research article] • <i>переклад</i> [translation of a text of professional interest] • <i>публіцистика</i> [social and political journalism] |

In the Macedonian sample, the mention of the analytical journalistic genres (*commentary, news report, opinion paragraph, analysis, interviews*) can be explained by the participation of the journalism majors, who were exposed to different writing practices than the English majors. The foreign languages majors mentioned genres which are considered literary, such as *novels, short stories* or explanations of concepts. Similarly to Romania and Ukraine, for the MA students the last piece graduate students in Macedonia wrote was the MA thesis. At the time when this survey was distributed not all students from all disciplines were required to write diploma papers (theses). The genres such as *analysis, critique, and article* were most frequently mentioned as last genres produced and all were argumentative and expository essays in terms of structure and content.

In the Romanian sample, when asked to name their last paper and describe it, students often gave the topic of the paper (e.g., 'Elena Văcărescu,' or 'it was about politics in history') instead of giving the name of a genre or a description of the text type they had to write. This suggests that, if the students were expected to write a particular type of text (e.g., an *essay, a report*), it was probably not explicitly labelled as such, and, if there were any genre conventions the texts were expected to follow, these may not have been transparent to the respondents, and they were taught in an implicit rather than in an explicit way. On the other hand, detailed descriptions are often given in the case of some genres taught during English classes, where instruction tends to be more explicit. For instance, in preparation courses for English language certification exams students are taught how to write letters of complaint by extracting genre features from given examples and/or they are given a template of rhetorical actions and linguistic features which they have to be able to use in their own texts. It is also significant that genre names were sometimes given in English, despite the fact that the survey was in Romanian (most students' native tongue). In some cases, responses mixed Romanian explanations with English

genre names (e.g., 'research proposal,' 'free writing'), suggesting that they were using the English name when the genre was an imported one which did not exist in current Romanian practice, and for which there was no widely used Romanian name yet.

In Romania, the best represented genres are the BA and the MA thesis, which are mandatory for all students at the end of the respective degrees. Among the equally well-represented types of paper is the *referat*, traditionally the main genre produced by university students, which remains important in most disciplines in our study. The requirements, however, vary widely: the *referat* may include original research or may be a literature review, an overview of a topic, or an analysis; it may or may not be argumentative in nature. It may be written, in which case it is sometimes called *lucrare de seminar* ('seminar paper'), but may also be delivered in class as an oral presentation, or written and then defended in class. It overlaps partly with the *eseu* ('essay') and *lucrare științifică/ lucrare de cercetare* ('research paper'), which are also widely used. The term 'essay' is used for a variety of texts, ranging from short subjective compositions to the characterisation of a literary character or an overview of a topic, and may or may not have an argumentative component. The responses testify to the increasing influence of Anglo-Saxon writing practices, with the more traditional teacher-centred education focusing on writing that demonstrates students' mastery of information (e.g., the *referat* or essay as overview of a topic), and the more recent emphasis on student-centredness materialized in writing assignments in which students have to undertake their own research or make their own argument.

The Ukrainian data show the obvious prevalence of the *referat*, understood as a compilation of various sources on a certain theme, and related genres, such as literature reviews and summaries. The popularity of these genres seems to be determined by educational traditions in Ukraine, which still value a product-based instruction with a strong emphasis on the reproduction of knowledge transmitted to students. The other prominent genres are course and graduation papers; their frequent use is caused by qualification requirements which make them obligatory for students of all majors. As to the rest of the genres mentioned by Ukrainians in open-ended questions, they seem to be linked to certain majors, faculties, departments or even courses. For example, essays are more likely to be produced by students of the Philology or Philosophy Faculties, social and political journalism by students of Journalism Faculty, and portfolios – by students of different faculties and departments who have to study pedagogy as an obligatory course.

Thus, the Likert-scale questions on genres produced similar results in the three countries, with notes during lectures as the most frequently produced genre, followed by various types of seminar/course/term paper, essays and theses, while differences could be ascribed mainly to the structure of the sample and, in some cases, to translation issues. The responses to the open-ended questions, however, suggest certain differences in the genre profiles of the three countries. Some of these may be due to differences in the educational systems (e.g. the *дипломна робота* in Ukraine, a graduation paper submitted for the Specialist's degree, which is higher than the Bachelor's but lower than Master's degree), others are triggered by the different degrees in which Anglo-Saxon writing norms have been adopted in the respective institution (e.g., the argumentative essay in Macedonia or Romania, especially among English majors), and others can be traced back to the writing traditions of each country (such as the *referat* in Ukraine and Romania). Interestingly, in all three countries, in-class written exams are not mentioned among the last papers students wrote, although to the experience of the authors they represent the main form of evaluation at undergraduate level.

Conclusion and Implications

Our study represents a first attempt of contrastive genre mapping in higher education in such countries as Macedonia, Romania and Ukraine and of examining the differences and commonalities in their genre systems. We may conclude that all three universities make use of a similar pool of genres and prioritize similar genres. To highlight these similarities we listed the genres mentioned most often at each university in Table 5 below. Among the six top priorities we find notes, essays, and seminar papers at all three universities. The research paper is within the top six priorities only in Ukraine and Romania, while in Macedonia it ranks seventh (25% mentions of 'often' and 'very often'). It seems, however, to be difficult to make clear distinctions between seminar paper, research paper and research-based argumentative essay. Less often reported genres seem to be specific either to a

certain discipline (technical report, journalistic texts) or to a certain text purpose (reflection, summarizing).

Table 5: Six genres mentioned most often at the three universities

| Priority | Macedonia | Ukraine | Romania |
|----------|------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| 1 | Notes (68) | Notes (84) | Notes (91) |
| 2 | Essay (59) | In-class exam (56) | In-class exam (54) |
| 3 | Seminar paper (36) | Research paper (50) | Seminar paper (45) |
| 4 | Reflections (33) | Essays (45) | Essay (38) |
| 5 | Proposal (32) | Seminar paper (34) | Summary (23) |
| 6 | Narrative/creative text (27) | Technical report (20) Narrative or creative text (20) Journalistic text (20) | Research paper (22) |

At the same time, many of the differences in the frequencies of genres mentioned (e.g., the presence of technical reports in Ukraine, translations in Romania and journalistic texts in Macedonia) can be traced back to differences in the disciplinary structures of the humanities departments studied, suggesting that disciplinary differences might override cultural differences to a considerable extent. Another result consistent with previous research is the large number of genres to be found in each of the three universities. Writing is by no means restricted to a range of basic genres but tends to integrate new genres when teaching becomes more deliberate as the Bologna process demands.

The interpretation of our results made it necessary to rely strongly on our knowledge of the cultural and educational contexts in which we work. We also became aware of our own cultural, i.e., national imprintings which obviously affect our interpretations and perceptions of writing. We feel that our attempt at mapping educational genres has been more successful at bringing up new questions for further investigation than at providing clear answers. We suggest including more qualitative research methods into intercultural genre mapping to get access to the personal dimensions of genre use and genre interpretation.

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