



Introducing *Genre(s)* in Translation

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Taken over by linguistics from literary and artistic criticism, where it was first used in Plato's and Aristotle's works, the concept of GENRE may be said to work as *an interface*, on the one hand, between text-external factors—such as context and 'tradition'—and text-internal features, like register and text-type, and, on the other, between what Woodstein, along with many other scholars, calls author intentions and reader expectations. Answering a need fundamental to human understanding, that of *categorizing and classifying existence*, GENRE mirrors, in text and discourse analysis, the *genus-species* taxonomies specific to other branches of science, ordering texts based on common features and shared conventions. As such, its usefulness in all areas that involve working with 'texts-in-use', from literature to technical or creative writing, translation, and pedagogy, could not be clearer.

However, even if its status within the broad disciplines of linguistics and translation studies should have been rather unproblematic, ever since its first definitions within the boundaries of these areas of study—in the works of Halliday and Hasan, for instance—there has been a constant effort to pinpoint the scope of GENRE and its *differentia specifica* in relation to other notions used in text analysis, especially that of TEXT TYPE (*e.g.*, Trosborg). In this respect, some of the defining features that make GENRE stand out among other text-related concepts are its application to 'complete' texts (Trosborg 12; Biber and Conrad 16), its influence on the structuring and layout of texts—Hasan maintains, for instance, that GENRE is defined by obligatory structural elements (62)—, and its being a matter of 'convention' (Miller), of discursal history (Bex) or tradition. Due to these characteristics and their role as mediators between the social and the individual, as Miller puts it, GENRES are 'recognisable' (Hyland; Bhatia) by

both their creators and their (intended) recipients, and thus deeply steeped in the cultures of the discourse communities that use them.

It is our opinion that all these features make GENRE(S) particularly interesting from the perspective of translation theory and practice, especially today, with the advent of new methodologies and tools (like *corpus linguistics*), and in the context of increased globalization, hybridization, and the threat of AI replacing or, at best, supplementing the human element in many work environments. We believe that it is precisely this changing context that calls for a deeper reflection on the role of GENRE(S) in the shaping of texts and their reception, and of translators in moving, (re)creating and (re)modelling them across cultures and communities. However, with a few notable exceptions, like Woodstein's recent book on the matter, covering literary genres—reviewed by Alexandra-Maria Vrînceanu in this *LINGUACULTURE* issue—, and a relatively small number of related chapters and papers—*e.g.*, Biel; Lapshinova-Koltunski and Zampieri; Monzó-Nebot; Kegalj and Borucinsky—the many facets of GENRE(S) in translation and translator training have remained largely unexplored in the past years. It is this gap that this thematic issue of *LINGUACULTURE*, devoted to *Genre(s) in Translation*, has aimed to begin to bridge.

In line with the conventional nature of GENRE(S), the papers in this issue are grouped according to the traditional—albeit obsolete, as some might argue, division between 'literary' and 'specialised' translation. Maybe due to its origins in this area of study, the concept of GENRE has attracted a larger number of contributions related to literary texts, both in prose and poetry, although the genres approached in the first two contributions, *i.e.*, SCIENCE FICTION and NEURONOVELS, respectively, are characterized by hybridisation and a borderline position between the *artes technicae* and literariness. The same could be said about the first specialized genre approached in the second section of the issue, that of WOMEN'S MAGAZINE ARTICLES.

Identifying the *fictional novum* and *cognitive validation* as the defining features of SCIENCE FICTION WRITING, [Sum Wong's paper](#) analyses their influence on the translation of metaphors in texts belonging to this genre. Embracing the premise that, at least in theory, while maintaining the source's distinguishing traits, science fiction translators should strive to achieve the same effects in the target text, Wong adopts a comprehensive view on the matter, analysing the way in which the syntactic form of metaphors (*e.g.*, copula-construction; apposition

and parallelism; genitive form), their content and their (extended) textual patterning could be dealt with in translation. Stressing that the translator's choices in relation to these metaphor "facets" may "(de)actualise the science fiction readers' expectations of cognitive estrangement in the target language", the author concludes that GENRE should become a critical dimension in the study of figurative language in general, and of metaphors and their translation in particular.

The genre of NEURONOVELS approached in [David Morariu's contribution](#) is another example of "interdiscursivity" and "hybridisation", as the author himself stresses, raising particularly challenging questions as far as translation is concerned. After a review of the concept of GENRE in relation to the notions of text type and register and in the works of some prominent translation scholars, the paper identifies the main features of NEURONOVELS and of what Morariu calls NEUROTRANSLATION, using them as "2-in-1 functional concepts" in the consistent analysis that follows, which focuses on the English to Romanian translation of vocal tics specific to Tourette Syndrome in Lethem's novel *Motherless Brooklyn*. The author ponders on the translator's choices and their implications while recognising that the specificities of this hybrid literary genre make some of the language used in it (*e.g.*, complex vocal tics originating from proper nouns) virtually "untranslatable".

Closing the series of contributions focusing on prose, [Constantin Dănuț Baicu's paper](#) deals with the (re)translations of *Pride and Prejudice*, one of the best-known works by Jane Austen, an author whose novels, by their unique combination of realism and irony, may be said to constitute a distinct genre on their own. Baicu highlights the vital role played by translations and retranslations in spreading Austen's creations across the globe and the ages, while noting that even the slightest shifts occurring in their interlingual and intercultural transfer may have an impact on the way in which the writer's style and ideas are received and understood. Analysing the lexical and pragmatic changes present in a series of carefully chosen examples from three retranslations of *Pride and Prejudice* into Romanian, Baicu also stresses how (re)translation analysis itself may serve as a tool in the understanding of the source text.

Various facets of the concept of retranslation in relation to poetic genres are considered in the next three papers from the literary section in this

LINGUACULTURE issue. [Amir Hussain's contribution](#) focuses on three retranslations of Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, a representative of both the PRISON WRITING and the BALLAD GENRE. As the author argues, a major feature of poetic genres in general is precisely their "resistance to translation", *i.e.*, their power to compel translators to "embrace their own sensual impressions of the source object (...) to create more poetry", and thus to translate "for poetry's sake". Questioning the validity of linguistic/semantic and even interpretive translation models in the case of poetry translation, Hussain uses the work of Wilde, known for his 'aestheticism', to show "the aesthetic permissibility of poetry as a genre of translation" and pleads for an aesthetic model of poetry translation.

Two different approaches to the translation of one poetic text, Eliot's poem "The Naming of Cats", are discussed, in relation to the practice of *transplantation* and to the concept of *register* by [Cristina-Mihaela Botîlcă in her paper](#). As the author shows, motivated by distinct views of the source text, its effects, and intended readership, the two Romanian versions of Eliot's text differ mainly in their treatment of proper names (a rather conservative approach vs. *transplantation*, *i.e.*, replacement by target language names) and their choice of lexis/register (a faithful rendition vs. informality). Based on the results of a survey answered by young readers, Botîlcă highlights the merits of retranslation and of *transplantation* in offering different interpretations of the source text and thus meeting a wider range of reader expectations and needs.

[Raluca Ștefania Pelin's contribution](#) explores the pedagogical virtues of poetry translation as a genre, made even more evident in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Starting from the idea that "translating poetry is an exercise that challenges both the emotional and the cognitive potentialities of translators", the author analyses her students' translations of two poems by Michael Swan, emphasizing their different approaches to and understanding of the source texts. Pelin posits that exercises in poetry translation help students have a better grasp of the intricacies of poetic imagery and of the languages involved while also stimulating their expressiveness. Moreover, the use of online social media in this kind of exercise fosters collaboration and the creation of translating communities.

[The paper signed by Annalisa Federici](#), which opens the section devoted to specialised genres in this LINGUACULTURE issue, deals with a hybrid genre situated at the crossroads of journalism, advertising, and fashion, *i.e.* the

WOMEN'S MAGAZINE ARTICLE. After thoroughly placing her perspective in this paper at the interface of gender, genre, and translation studies, and showing how these areas of scholarly interest interrelate, the author proceeds to highlight the main features of women's magazines and their relation to translation. Federic's ensuing analysis of the US and French editions of 1920s Vogue Magazine—the latter being mainly produced through translations from the former—shows how, in this particular genre and context, “translation has represented a key textual and editorial tool which has also contributed to consolidating gender identities and reinforcing a particular ideal of womanhood”.

Informed by her actual practice as a translator, [Paola Tosi's contribution](#) is a reflection, on the one hand, on the main features of web content, and, specifically, of BUSINESS WEBSITES, as a genre, and, on the other, on the available strategies to be used by translators when dealing with such texts. Of particular interest to both scholars and practitioners alike could be her inventory of possible solutions to support the balancing act between respecting corporate values and meeting reader expectations as far as fair language is concerned, *e.g.*, gender-neutral language, the use of specific colours, mentions of disability, and consideration for website accessibility.

Also inspired by his own work as a practitioner and teacher, [Ondřej Klabal's paper](#) is a hands-on demonstration on how genre-related competence can be built and strengthened in translation trainees. After an overview of the main genres and types of documents to be found in the legal field, the author presents a series of exercises—tackling, for instance, the (non)correspondence of genres across jurisdictions or the macrostructure of parallel texts—that can be used in the translation classroom to raise the students' awareness of the challenges involved in the interlingual transfer of legal registers and genres, with a view to the asymmetry specific to both legal genres and cultures.

The final original article in this issue offers a new perspective by exploring the methodological potential of an essentially audiovisual genre, *i.e.*, SUBTITLES. The [paper signed by Pilar Orero and Alexander Shvets](#) starts by highlighting the main features of subtitles as a text type to show how they can be used in semantic analysis, to serve research purposes and or to inform media production. Adopting the view that “public broadcasters have the social responsibility to inform all their viewers about environmental issues and the

climate crisis through their programming”, the authors propose using the analysis of subtitles in order to gauge “how green the media are”.

Some other facets of *Genre(s) in Translation* are explored in the three book reviews that close this issue: of the latest monograph on this topic, B.J. Woodstein’s [*Translation and Genre*](#), Alexandru Praisler’s analysis of the interplay of [*Language, Power and Intercultural Communication: The Policies and Politics of Translation*](#), and of a book on P.L. Fermor, a “specialist” of travel writing and travelogues, Dan Horațiu Popescu’s [*Layers of the Text & Context. Patrick Leigh Fermor & Friends*](#).

The diversity of the genres approached in this *LINGUACULTURE* issue—science fiction writing, neuronovels, Jane Austen’s works, prison writing and the ballad, poetry, women’s magazine articles, business websites, legal genres, and subtitles—as well as of the approaches adopted and the insights provided by our contributors is proof that far from being exhausted and obsolete, the concept of GENRE is still fully functional and relevant to the translation studies landscape today.

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