CCCC 2024 International Writing Workshop

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**Title: WRITING-FOR-TRANSLATION STYLISTICS**

1. **Institutional description**

The research takes place at the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov (Slovakia). The University of Prešov (hereinafter PU) is a full-fledged center of research activities. The Faculty of Arts (hereinafter as FA) is the second oldest Faculty of Arts in Slovakia. It offers undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs in teacher training, translation and interpreting (6 languages), psychology, history, philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, political science, and social work. The faculty’s workload comprises teaching (60%) and research/publishing (40%). Both basic and applied research is conducted primarily through grant projects. The faculty members conduct research and publish it in the journals and publishing houses across Slovakia as well as abroad. Either way, the language of the publications is very often English. Unfortunately, the university does not offer writing center service, as this kind of support is not a common practice and has not been institutionalized in Slovakia. The faculty have to rely on their conventionalized writing skills and arrange for having a paper translated. The outcomes of the proposed research should be beneficial to all faculty aspiring to have a paper published in English.

1. **About the research**

**1 Reality check – the incentive for the research**

* Slovak authors (humanities) struggle with having their papers published by renowned international journals or publishers.
* Slovak translators struggle with translating Slovak “soft science” papers into English.

Why is it so? 🡪 There must be a clash in the expectations.

What kind of expectations? 🡪 content-related and form-related

**2 The background of the research**

Conventionalized practices and language traditions determine the way we acquire the principles of writing. One’s school years create a basis for applying knowledge to professional life; we use the learned schemes even when the text is to be written in a language with different conventions and linguistic traditions. Very often, we are not even aware of the differences and expect a universal approach across languages and across study fields. The reality shows the opposite: if the former is expected, an author has difficulty placing a paper abroad; the latter is evidenced in the different approach that soft and hard sciences take in presenting research results – obviously, they follow different values. We believe, linguistic behavior in academic papers is not universal across study fields and linguacultures, rather they are determined by respectively disciplinary values and writing styles. In order to help researchers become internationally visible, a translator needs to be aware of disciplinary values and how they translate into academic writing. However, a translator cannot be familiarized with the disciplinary values of all study fields; thus, an author should step in and provide this information, or a translator should have these principles available. To facilitate this, we aim to identify disciplinary values and translate them into academic writing. We hope to make the results available through establishing the field of writing for translation stylistics.

**3 Pilot research**

We have conducted a pilot study – genre analysis of Slovak and English papers in applied linguistics. We stated the following research questions:

* What values typify applied linguistics texts?
* How do values translate into the build-up of applied linguistics texts in English and in Slovak?

STEP 1

The first task was to conceptualize the notion of disciplinary value. We conducted research into scholarly writing (cf Murin et al., 2021) and studied writing guides and instructions for scholars in impacted journals in the following disciplines: anthropology, art history, family science and social work, geography, history, culture studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, and education. We identified areas, attached statements to them and conducted content analysis. Some statements were relocated, some categories were merged, or some tags were reconsidered. The original proposal of categories was reduced to four core categories, which as a matter of fact supply answers to questions what, why, and how: content (what), approach (why), methodology (how), and composition (how). Further, we specified these values for applied linguistics (Kačmárová, Bilá, Vaňková, Forthcoming).

Values Proposed for Applied Linguistics

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Value** |
| Content | **the study of emerging and innovative concepts related to language phenomena in the subfields of applied linguistics. The research may be both empirical and conceptual; if the latter is the case, it is to be supported by empirical evidence or to draw on real-life language-related issues** |
| Approach | the research is supposed to introduce a relevant, compelling, and original idea, provide for arguments justified by the current need in the real-world language practice, and develop the thesis through empirically accessible data |
| Methodology | clear statement of a research problem, appropriateness of the methods in relation to the type of research (conceptual or empirical) inclusive of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability in qualitative research; suitability of statistical methods in quantitative research; coding principles, sampling principles, or using control groups in either |
| Composition | concise placement of the research problem into relevant and recent research and scholarship, linear development of a thought, justification of the significance for the practice |

Source: Kačmárová, Bilá, Vaňková, Forthcoming

STEP 2

Secondly, we aimed to specify how these disciplinary values translate into the layout and built-up of applied linguistics papers. The components of the scheme may reflect three levels of academic writing, namely macrostructure, mezzostructure, and microstructure (Kačmárová, Bilá, Vaňková, 2023). The macrostructure involves the type of information (empirical vs conceptual), which is aligned within all four categories. The mezzostructure implies the organization of ideas, paragraph arrangement, internal structuring and length, homogeneity of ideas within a paragraph; it is linked with the categories of Content and Composition. The microstructure, an interplay of text semantics, syntax, and stylistics (ibid) implies Composition. These values imply text build-up prompts, such as:

What is the ratio of theoretical information and actual research?

What type of methodology is applied?

Does the research include a hypothesis / research questions / research plan?

What is the order of “theoretical” versus research-based information?

What is the aim of the “theoretical” information? What is the extent of direct application of such statements?

What is the level of textual formality based on the scale ranging from neutral through formal up to very formal?

What is the level of objectivity, clarity and demystification of statements?

To what degree is the authors’ idiosyncrasy tolerable?

We compared Slovak-written texts against the benchmark of Anglo-American academic writing.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Writing style | form-oriented: Anglo-American |
| Type of discourse (structure and language) | linear and dialogic 🡪 🡪 🡪 🡪 🡪 |
| Priority | research problem statement |
| Backgrounded | information of theoretical nature and/or theorizing |
| Type of information | empirical |
| Argumentation | inductive |
| Language | * language economy, exact and specific language, information is directly related to the main thesis and aim * the author is responsible for reader-friendliness of the text |

Source: Kačmárová, Bilá, Vaňková, 2023

FINDINGS

The above questions were studied and evaluated in English written and Slovak written applied linguistics papers. Their comparison yielded the following observation, namely nuances of routine Slovak approach to writing academic text contrary to routine Anglo-American writing style.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Macrostructure** | **Routine Slovak approach to writing academic text** | |
| Type of information | * not necessarily of empirical nature * obscured research problem * abundant theoretical information * it is common, sometimes even felt necessary to refer to older sources | |
| Text layout | * literature-mention-based * often without indicating sections * highly idiosyncratic, often resembling “freestyle” * non-conventional, unpredictable structure * absence of research problem statement * unclear statement of research aim * absence or unclear wording of research questions/hypotheses, methodology | |
| **Mezzostructure** |  | |
| Organization of ideas, paragraph development | * the purpose of the paper is delayed (if present at all) * absence of internal structuring of a paragraph, combining different ideas in a paragraph or lacking support * spiral development of a topic (moving forth and back) leading to underdeveloped or overdeveloped paragraphs * heterogeneity of ideas – multiple standpoints or perspectives | |
| **Microstructure** |  | |
| the nature of discourse | * non-linear – spiral and unpredictable arrangement of text * monologic – neglecting a reader, adopting a view that it is the reader who should take effort not the author, thus reader-friendliness is not an issue * vague discourse: | |
| pluralis auctoris | using pronoun ‘we’ to refer to a single author |
| principle of repetition | expressions of different origin but identical meaning or ideas paraphrased within the same sentence |
| recurring clustering of three items | expressions coming in groups of three |
| Padding | e.g. … in the context of support of development |
| artificial elaborateness | pretentious language – syntactic and lexical, piling up phrases creating the illusion of embroidery added to the matter to make the impression of scientific complexity and sophistication |
| matryoshka effect | the gist is either hidden in the bulky language or delayed until the end of the paper |

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PILOT STUDY

The results show great discrepancies between Slovak and English on all three levels. As a result, we consider it necessary to introduce a systematic approach to writing in English for publication, and dare establish a new subfield of stylistics – writing for translation stylistics – that should be included into the curriculum in the translation studies (but not only). The framework for this new subfield of stylistics may as well be Krishnan’s (2009) characteristics of a field/discipline. In his view, disciplines must have:

1. a particular object, or focus, for their research

2. a body of accumulated specialist knowledge specific to the discipline

3. theories that organise the specialist knowledge

4. specific terminologies

5. specific research methods

6. some institutional manifestation in the form of subjects taught at universities or colleges, respective academic departments and professional associations connected to it

In the case of WFTS, all these points can be filled with specific content and form, which however necessitates research into other study fields or disciplines.

Krishnan, A. 2009. Five Strategies for Practising Interdisciplinarity. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, 1-11.

**4 Research to be conducted**

Our affiliation, Faculty of Arts, presupposes looking into the study fields of humanities and social/behavioral sciences, namely education, history, media studies, political science, philology, philosophy, psychology, social work.

*Research plan for each above-mentioned discipline*

1. Compiling the corpus of research papers published in Slovak and foreign renowned database journals in the above-mentioned disciplines
2. The papers will be subjected to content analysis within four categories of values: content, methodology, approach, composition (see glossary for their conceptualization).
3. The obtained information will be coded according to categories of values, and each value will be conceptualized for the respective field.
4. As part of the composition value, the papers will be analyzed at the macro-/mezzo-/micro-level: i.e. respectively text segmentation, specification of the type of research, its goal, hypothesis or research question, research plan, ratio of information of theoretical and empirical nature; method of developing text sections, internal structure of the paragraph; economy and objectivity of expression.
5. The last step will be verbalizing the principles conventionalized in English writing style of that particular discipline or study field.

**5 In summary**

The recipient of a text written in English does not know the principles of the author’s native linguaculture and expects the text written in English to be in accordance with the Anglo-American writing style. If text written in Slovak is intended for translation into English, a translator has to be granted powers to incorporate changes following the conventions of Anglo-American writing style. An alternative is drafting a text in Slovak while observing the conventions of academic writing in English. For this to take place, a subfield of stylistics may as well be introduced, namely writing for translation stylistics. In order to establish such a subfield, in-depth research needs to be conducted, and it should consider disciplinary writing. The tentative hypothesis is that a minority linguaculture needs to account for subfield of stylistics that deals with structuring of text intended for translation into English and it will eventually enhance success in having papers published in renowned database journals publishing in English.

**III. Key Theorists and Theories**

# The major impetus for the research

# Galtung, J. (1981). Structure, culture, and intellectual style: An essay comparing Saxonic, Teutonic, Gallic and Nipponic approaches. Social Science Information 20 (6):817-856. <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901848102000601>

The term writing style appears for the first time in Galtung (1981), identifying Anglo-Saxon (UK/USA), Germanic (D), Gaelic (F), and Japanese (J) styles. This is the key material behind our claim of a clash between Slovak and Anglo-American writing styles. Based on this piece, we conducted research and identified major differences that may as well impede the international visibility of Slovak scholars in applied linguistics (see authors’ publications below) and hope to continue in other fields of humanities and social/behavioral sciences.

1. **Sources used to understand the basics of intercultural differences**

* Bowe, H., & Martin, K. (2007). Communication across Cultures. Mutual Understanding in a Global World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
* Clyne, M. (1994). Inter-cultural Communication at Work: Cultural Values in Discourse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
* Dahl, S. (2004). Intercultural Research: The Current State of Knowledge. Middlesex University Discussion Paper No. 26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.658202>

These sources provided the primer for understanding the concept of culture and linguaculture and prompted intercultural research.

**3. Sources on Slovak stylistics (prescriptive)**

* Mistrík, J. (1997). Štylistika. Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo
* Hybenová, Ľ., & Saganová, R. (2012). Slohy pre všetkých. Žilina: Školmédia

These sources were consulted to define what is intuitively done by native speakers of Slovak.

**4. Research-based sources on Czech and Slovak (Slavic) writing tradition**

* Chamonikolasová, J. (2005). Comparing the structures of texts written in English and Czech. Slovak Studies in English I (Conference Proceedings). Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského, 77–84.
* Čmejrková, S. (1996). Academic writing in Czech and English. Academic Writing: Intercultural and textual issues (Ventola, E., Mauranen A. (eds)) Pragmatics and Beyond New Series 41. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
* Walková, M. (2014). Rozdiely medzi slovenským a angloamerickým odborným štýlom na príklade jazykovedných textov. Jazyk a kultúra 19–20/2014. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Walkova_studia%20(1).pdf>
* Ponton D., Ozyumenko V., & Larina T. (2023). Lingua-Cultural Identity in Translation: ’We’ vs ’I’ Cultures. Journal of Language and Education, 9(4), 73-84. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/PC/Downloads/Lingua-Cultural_Identity_in_Translation_We_vs_I%20(1).pdf>

These are the primary references looking into the differences between Slovak/Czech and English academic writing conventions.This research points to the differences between these styles in terms of the type of information, the arrangement of the text, the organization of ideas, or the nature of the discourse.

**5. Sources on understanding and interpreting values**

* Disciplinary Writing Guides. (n.d.). Howe Writing Across the Curriculum Programs – Miami University. Retrieved December 30, 2022, from <https://www.miamioh.edu/hcwe/hwac/teaching-support/disciplinary-writing-hwac/>
* Harvard Writing Project. (n.d.). Retrieved December 30, 2022, from <https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/pages/disciplinary-writing-guides>
* Hyland, K. (2000). Disciplinary discourses: Social interactions in academic writing. Longman
* Liddicoat, A. J. (2010). Applied linguistics in its disciplinary context. Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, 33(2), 14.1-14.17. <https://doi.org/10.2104/aral1014>

These sources represent a springboard for understanding and conceptualizing a disciplinary value.

**IV. Themed Glossary**

**1 Disciplinary values**

*Value scheme:*a best-practice toolkit as exercised by the recognized authorities in the field reflecting what would count as a desired research output and a report on conducted research; a model to be followed by novice researchers, including undergraduate students; a scheme functioning as a benchmark for reviewers of research outputs written by both scholars and students; presently 5-point scheme, otherwise an open system.

*Value (disciplinary):* A basic norm or quality marking a particular performance as valid in a specific discipline and related to the conventionalized procedure in the research implementation and the impact of the findings.

*Approach as a value in applied linguistics:*a principle (or a set of principles) guiding an author on their path to selecting a topic, narrowing it down, and identifying a research problem; introducing a relevant, compelling, and original idea, providing arguments justified by the current need in the real-world language practice, and developing the thesis through empirically accessible data.

*Composition as a value in applied linguistics:* a way of putting ideas together, developing paragraphs, developing a thesis, as well as the ratio of literature review and mere research in the final draft; concise placement of the research problem into relevant and recent research and scholarship, linear development of a thought, justification of the significance for the practice.

*Content as a value in applied linguistics:* the subject matter of the discipline with regard to topicality, significance, relevance and/or the assumed gap in knowledge; an element representing a merit in the current debate; **the study of emerging and innovative concepts related to language phenomena in the subfields of applied linguistics; empirical, conceptual or combined research (if conceptual research is the case, it is to be supported by empirical evidence or to draw on real-life language-related issues).**

*Methodology as a value in applied linguistics:* a way of treating an argument, as an overarching strategy employed in the research, a rationale for the research implementation, a means of research problem resolution; clear statement of a research problem, appropriateness of the methods in relation to the type of research (conceptual, empirical or combined) inclusive of: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability in qualitative research; suitability of statistical methods in quantitative research; coding principles, sampling principles, or using control groups in either.

**2 Paper layout**

*Macrostructure:*the function of the text, the layout, organization of the text; we understand macrostructure in terms of type of information and text layout. The former can represent a text that is empirical, theoretical, or theorizing in nature. An empirical text is based on empirical research; a theoretical text is based on research advancing a theory or contributing a new paradigm.

*Mezzostructure:* paragraphing, paragraph development, organization of ideas, paragraph arrangement, internal structuring (understood as presence of topic sentence, support, and closing sentence), length of paragraphs, homogeneity of ideas (vs multiple standpoints) in a paragraph.

*Microstructure:*sentence structuring, vocabulary choice, stylistic appropriateness, we understand microstructure as an interplay of text semantics, syntax, and stylistics.

**3 Slovak writing peculiarities**

*Baroqueness***:** too much of everything, like the principle of repetition, recurring clustering of three items, padding (see below).

*Matriyoshka effect:*the gist is either hidden in the bulky language or delayed until the end of the paper; A reader uncovers what is at the core through continuous opening of matrioshka dolls to reveal something of the same sort inside.

*Pluralis auctoris:* or pluralis modestiae, i.e. pronoun ‘we’ is used to refer to a single author. Slovak scholars recognize the use of pluralis auctoris as an indicator of scientific objectivity of a scholarly paper and its author´s modesty. Using first person plural pronoun thus implies backgrounding the scholar, depersonalizing, and foregrounding the research and its outcomes.

*Principle of repetition:* prose typically includes two types of synonyms: expressions of different origin but identical meaning and ideas paraphrased within the same sentence.

*Redundant structures:*or padding, microstylistic redundancy on the level of a phrase, a part of a clause, and a whole clause. redundant segments (printed in italics in source texts and their semantic translations into English) make their English renderings too verbose, less succinct and less concise. Oftentimes, a redundant segment disrupts the flow of thought thus requiring more processing time on the reader’s part.

*Repetitive grouping of three items:*Slovak authors like to adopt a fairy-tale-like rhetoric in that their expressions come in groups of three. Our view is, when this occurs once in a time, it is not disturbing. However, if such clustering is repeated with different word classes in one paragraph, the reader may perceive it annoying.

**Authors’ preliminary research**

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