EU PRESIDENCY PROGRAMMES AS A GENRE

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Abstract. Along with acting in political, economic and social arenas of the European Union, Latvia was also honoured to preside over the Council of Europe in 2015. This has resulted in the creation of the network of genres pertinent to this communicative event in both Latvian and English to reflect the discursive practices involved. In this view, the present cross-sectional empirical research aims at exploring the written genre of the European Union presidency programmes as one of fundamental documents to propose a set of tentative activities in various economically and socially significant spheres. The theoretical framework for analysis involved the fundamental principles of institutional discourse and the tenets of English for Specific Purposes and New Rhetoric Genre Schools. The exploration of the situational context involves the description of players, the discursive practices and the genre as a textual manifestation of this practice. The results of genre analysis highlight the centrality of the communicative aim and rigid generic macro-structure of a relatively novel genre, which relates to the colony of reporting genres performing the transactional language metafunction. The variation of optional moves occurs as allowed by the communicative aim, which contributes to genre integrity. The topicality of the study is determined by the scarcity of previous research on the genre in question and wide application of research findings.

Key words: EU presidency programmes, genre analysis, macro-structure, communicative aim, discursive practice

INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) presidency programme, a relatively new genre emerging as a result of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 regulating the trio presidency of the Council of Europe by three Member states, has not yet been extensively investigated. Despite the equal status of the EU member state languages, English often gains priority over other EU working languages, serving as a *lingua franca* and facilitating the operation of supranational bodies, such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the European Parliament and other organisations (Berns, 2003; Mayr, 2008; Online 1). There has been a heated debate about the role and status of English since the UK decided to leave the alliance (Brexit) facilitated by the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee. However, dramatic changes are highly unlikely due the fact that English is the official language in Ireland and Malta as well as the high added costs which would result from the exclusion of English (Online 2).

Moreover, the topicality of the theme also lies in the fact that the communicative aims of the genre in question have not been outlined and the present

paper and the existing research on the EU institutional language use focus on the implementation of language policy (House, 2003), limited linguistic features (Online 3; Online 4) and the relation between language and power (Diez, 2014).

Given this, the present research aims at bridging this gap and carrying out the move and step analysis of the EU presidency programmes as one of significant documents for referencing the intentions of the presiding country, setting priorities, facing challenges and solving problems regarding integration, international security, business, innovations, financial stability and climate change in the EU member states. The analysis contributes to the development of genre integrity of presidency programmes and facilitates its recognition as a genre. It is of particular importance for state officials, policy makers, project managers as well as translators since it enables them to recognise the generic macro-structure, navigate through it easily and create intertextually and interdiscursively related documents referring to the genre in question. Since Latvia joined the EU in 2004, it has committed itself to active participation in all EU social, political and economic initiatives, the presidency over the Council of Europe being one of them.

The present research presents an exploration of the situational context and macro-structure of the genre in question, followed by the analysis of rhetorical patterns. The theoretical basis for the analysis has been to a large extent grounded in the tenets of institutional discourse and the Genre School of English for Specific Purposes and New Rhetoric Studies, the latter being complementary. The empirical research method is the genre analysis. The corpus for the study comprises 91,268 words of the authentic materials of five most recent presidencies in the years 2013–2016, including that of Latvia.

GENRE IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

There exists a certain overlap in the use of the notions organisational and institutional discourse. Grant, Hardy, Oswick and Putnam (2004) use them interchangeably. They define organisational or institutional discourse as the interrelated and structured collections of genre 'embodied in the practices of talking and writing (as well as a wide variety of visual representations and cultural artefacts) that bring organizationally related objects into being as these texts are produced, disseminated and consumed. They signify collections of interactions, media of communication (i.e., oral, print, electronic), or assemblages of oral and written forms' (ibid.: 3). According to them organisational discourse is characterised by the following features:

1. plurivocality, i.e. multiple phenomena are unveiled for analysis at a time;
2. context sensitive language use;
3. the negotiation of meaning;
4. intertextuality;
5. cognitive approaches and reflexivity (ibid.).

Mayr distinguishes between organisational and institutional discourse and notes that the term organisation is 'more used for commercial corporations', while institution is 'more associated with the public organs of state' (Mayr, 2008: 4). Thornborrow (2013: 2) characterises the latter as goal or task oriented, posing constraints on 'what is regarded as legitimate contributions to the goal or task interferences in the way utterances are interpreted' while Illie (2001: 222) adds that 'goals often influence the linguistic behaviour of those who are participating in an institutional discourse as they have to take on specific roles, follow established rules and use conventionalised language forms, which overlaps with context sensitive language use and the negotiation of meaning discussed above'.

In this regard, the concept of generic integrity is of particular importance. According to Bhatia (1995, 2001) and Hyland (2002: 116), it is the manifestation of explicit linguistic means, e.g. discursive and lexico-grammatical patterns characteristic of the genre, applied on a regular basis, produced and consumed by a discourse community and forming recognisable genre structural identity. Biber, Connor and Upton (2007) distinguish obligatory and secondary rhetorical structures (moves), the former being fundamental for integrity and the latter accounting for variation depending on the influence of the situational context. Subject to colonisation, the integrity may be invaded and may result in hybridisation (mixing and embedding) and recontextualisation (Bhatia, 2004: 58). However, as the empirical results show, it is not the case for this study as the presidency programme is a rigid and stabilised genre created as a result of the discursive activity in institutional situational context.

Considering the abovementioned, Bhatia's (1999) framework for situational context modelling in which genres occur is particularly applicable, as it reflects the key characteristic features of both institutional and organisational discourse and constitutes purposes (institutionalised community goals and communicative purposes), products (textual artefacts or genres), practices (discursive practices, procedures and processes) and players (discourse community membership) (1999: 4).

GENRE ANALYSIS

ESP scholars (Swales, 1990, 2004; Bhatia 1993, 2004; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001) view genres as a reflection of discursive institutional or organisational practices which consist of staged communicative goals, have conventionalised structure and are recognised by the members of discourse community. Institutionalised goals can be best investigated applying the move and step analysis, where move corresponds to one distinct communicative aim, step serving as an objective to achieve it. Initially designed to investigate research paper introductions and having pedagogical implications, it was later transferred to other genres and heavily criticised by corpus linguists (Biber, Connor and Upton, 2007) due to unclear boundaries of each move, variability of steps to constitute each move as well as underestimating the importance of obligatory and

optional moves for the generic macro-structure. For instance, ESP researchers pursued structural move analysis to describe global organisational patterns in genres such as experimental research articles (Swales, 1990), master of science dissertations (Hopkins and Dudley-Evans, 1988), medical abstracts (Salager-Meyer, 1991), business letters (Bhatia, 1993) and legalese (Bhatia, 1997). Bhatia noted that communicative purposes can be 'specified at various levels based on an increasingly delicate degree of specificity, which makes it possible for genres to be identified either narrowly or more broadly, depending upon the objectives of the investigation' (2001: 81). In their research, Swales and Bhatia were influenced by content schemata (background knowledge patterns) or scripts (Schank and Abelson, 1977) and scenarios (Sanford and Garrod, 1981) and formal schemata (Carrell, 1981, 1987), i.e. prior text patterns, the interaction of which results in successful genre production and consumption (cited in Bruce 2008:31).

Having extensive corpus data and challenging the staging of content through moves and steps rather than rhetorical structure, Biber (1989) claimed that genres cannot be solely described in linguistic terms and should be 'defined and distinguished on the basis of systematic, non-linguistic criteria', which gave rise to the development of genre as a social phenomenon, highlighting the significance of a discourse community, implementing ethnographic approach, thus broadening the concept of genre (Biber, 1989: 39). However, Trimble (1985) showed a direct connection between the overall communicative aim, moves and rhetorical patterning, distinguishing descriptions, definitions, explanations, cause-effect, chronological and other relations. In his later research Swales (1998: 54) viewed discourse community's 'nomenclature for genres [as] an important source of insight to provide significant ethnographic information for social context modelling to interpret how and why discourse participants utilise genres and to reflect discursive processes'.

More importantly, Askehave and Swales revisited the notion of communicative purpose and claimed that it has assumed a taken-for-granted status, a convenient but under-considered starting point for the analyst. In their view, 'purposes, goals, or public outcomes are more evasive, multiple, layered, and complex than originally envisaged... and we are no longer looking at a simple enumerable list or 'set' of communicative purposes, but at a complexly layered one, wherein some purposes are not likely to be officially 'acknowledged' by the institution, even if they may be 'recognised' – particularly in off-record situations – by some of its expert members' (Askehave and Swales, 2001: 197–199).

In later research, the ESP scholars viewed genre as a social construct and focused their investigations on recurrent rhetorical structures in relation to communicative purposes. According to Bhatia (2004: 31),

> they interpreted such structures not simply in terms of schematic patterns of individual readers, but more narrowly in terms of the socio-cognitive patterns that most members of a discourse community use to construct and interpret discourses specific to their institutional cultures.

Whereas Fairclough (1995) in the analysis of discursive practice focuses on how the authors of texts draw on already existing genres to create a text, and on how the receivers of texts also apply available discourses and genres in the consumption and interpretation of texts. It is best summarised in Figure 1 below.
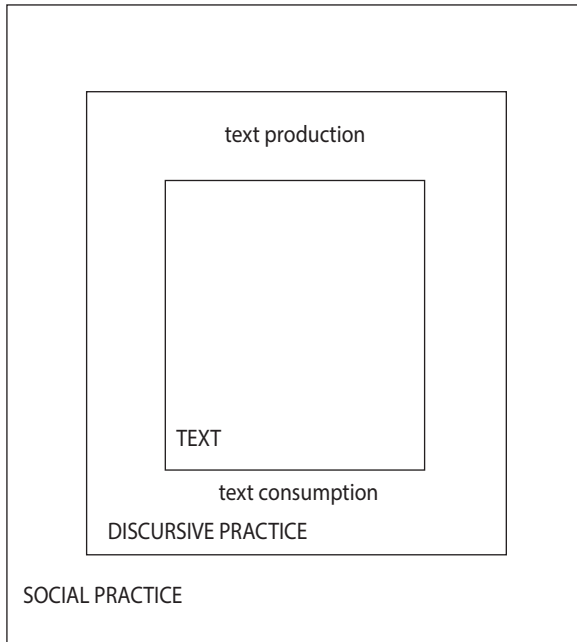

Figure 1 **Text as a reflection of discursive and social practice** (Fairclough, 1995: 98)

The principle that a discursive practice mediates the relationship between texts and social practice and is viewed as an instrument to use language to produce and consume texts as part of wider social practice was also reflected in the research by the scholars of New Rhetoric Genre Studies (Devitt, 1991; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995) and in later papers of such ESP researchers as Bhatia (2008), Swales and Feak (2009).

Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) claimed that genres dynamically reflect the knowledge and activities of a discourse community and the processes of knowledge formation and genre formation are bound by a socio-cognitive perspective. They outlined the following genre characteristics in relation to genre as a social action of a discourse community:

1. dynamism
2. situatedness
3. form and content
4. duality of structure
5. community ownership. (ibid.: 4)

The scholars maintained the opinion that genres change in accordance with the communicative needs of the discourse community and are viewed as 'dynamic rhetorical forms that are developed from actors' responses to recurrent situations and that serve to stabilise experience and give it coherence and meaning' (ibid.). They considered that genre network reflects discursive practices, actions and operations, and, therefore, change as soon as the activities change since 'our knowledge of genres is derived from and embedded in our participation in the communicative activities of daily and professional life' (ibid.). The discursive practice being overarching, discourse community in New Rhetoric tradition should be regarded as a community of practice, which not only recognises the form and structure of certain genres, but also locates it in wider linguistic and socio-cultural context and applies it appropriately. The duality of structure presupposes that genre and discursive and social practices mutually influence each other. The ownership of genre as a social action is unique in a way that the participants involved in the process of communication share common knowledge base, but for the outsiders they are difficult to identify and manipulate.

To summarise, the boundaries between the organisational and institutional discourse are vague and often the notions are used interchangeably with little or no difference. The unifying characteristics that influence genre creation in both types of discourse are the constituent parts of situational context, namely, the institutionalised communicative aim, the discursive processes, the social practice, generic integrity, dynamism and discourse community ownership. The generic integrity is best seen applying the move and step analysis that is a staged representation of content in reference to the communicative aim. Though criticised for its obscurity, it has evolved and been widely used by the ESP scholars and implemented to analyse various genres.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

The goals formulated at the beginning of the research determined the research methodology, namely, a descriptive study was implemented with the research focus on the generic macro-structure of the EU presidency programmes, following the ESP and the New Rhetoric Genre School theoretical considerations as well as the tenets of institutional discourse. The research was based on the review of secondary sources to build a consistent theoretical framework for the research activities as well as the genre analysis of the documents naturally occurring in the institutional setting. In particular, the presidency programme is a genre of institutional discourse outlining the operations of European public organs of state. As mentioned above, this type of discourse is goal oriented, determining a set of linguistic means and influencing linguistic behaviour; therefore, the concept of the communicative goal/aim is of primary importance for this paper. The exploration of the situational context enables us to describe the discursive processes behind this genre, the genre as such as

a textual manifestation of those processes, discourse participants involved and the communicative goals or aims. The next layer of the analysis is the investigation of macro-structure by means of the move and step analysis, accounting for integrity with communicative aim being central. Last but not least, the rhetorical patterns are investigated to address the limitation of the move and step analysis proposed by Biber (1989) and Biber, Connor and Upton (2007).

Although five EU presidency programmes were analysed, the preliminary screening of earlier documents demonstrated a similar generic macro-structure, which, according to Silverman contributes to the reliability of the study, i.e. the 'degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions' (Silverman, 2005: 224). Within the framework of this study, in addition to the triangulation of theories, reliability is ensured by the elaboration of the research design, which was done by selecting the most recent presidency programmes of the Netherlands, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg and Ireland (Online 5). It proceeded with the description of the situational context (Bhatia, 1999; Grant et al., 2004; Mayr,2008 and Thornborrow, 2013) and the discursive processes (Fairclough, 1995; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995; Bhatia, 2008), followed by the move and step analysis (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 2004; Biber, Connor and Upton, 2007). It was continued by conducting the analysis of rhetorical patterns (Trimble, 1985).

Following Maxwell's (1996) proposed taxonomy of validity in qualitative research, the present study complies with the requirements of descriptive validity, in terms of undertaking a multi-level genre analysis to ensure the factual accuracy of data. Interpretive validity is addressed by means of situational context involvement in interpreting the results and discussing the communicative events, discursive practices and the communicative purposes of the documentation in question. Theoretical validity concerns 'the appropriate level of theoretical abstraction and how well this theory explains or describes the phenomenon in question' (Dörnyei, 2007: 58). The cause and effect nature of the investigated problem ensures internal validity.

The following authentic materials of five presidencies in the years 2013–2016 have been analysed:

Table 1 **Presidency programmes under analysis**

Country	Year	Presidency programme code
Ireland	2013	Programme 1
Italy	2014	Programme 2
Latvia	2015	Programme 3
Luxembourg	2015	Programme 4
Netherlands	2016	Programme 5

RESULTS

1 DESCRIBING SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

The analysis of the situational context applying Bhatia's (1999) framework revealed that the players or participants of the communicative event, the officials of the member states holding the presidency, work together closely in groups of three, called 'trios'. This system was introduced in 2009. The 'trios' determine long-term aims and share a common agenda, outline the topics and major significant issues to be considered by the Council over an 18-month-period in the 'trio' programme. The presidency of the Council rotates among the EU member states every 6 months. During this period, the country runs meetings at every level in the Council, ensuring the continuity and sustainability of its work. On the basis of the 'trio' programme, each of three countries prepares its own, a more detailed, 6-month programme. The abovementioned discursive processes determine the key textual products, i.e. genres, which are the 'trio' programme, the programme of each member state presidency, agendas of meetings, proposals for a regulation of various branches and the report concluding the presidency, forming an intertextual and interdiscursive network.

The document of particular significance for this study is the member state programme. It possesses the peculiarities of the institutional discourse as presented by Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995), Illie (2001), Grant et al. (2004), Mayr (2008) and Thornborrow (2013). Though it emerged dynamically in response to the new communicative event documented in the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, it has a rigid form and content contributing to generic integrity, which may be explained by using a context sensitive language and focusing on the negotiation of meaning to create legitimate institutional discourse units to be presented for community judgement and ownership.

Though every member state might highlight different aspects, the overall communicative aim of the document at large is to outline and prioritise the key areas for coordination and providing impetus for the EU institutions as well as respond to economically, politically and socially significant issues in Europe and beyond. These programmes establish the EU as a global player, outline societal changes, employment, financial stability and growth, unified digital and energy markets, integration, international security, business, innovations, and climate change, which are reflected in the move and step structure (Swales, 1990; Biber, Connor and Upton, 2007) below.

2 PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION AND MOVE STRUCTURE

Programme 1 was implemented from January to June 2013. The presiding country set the goal of elaboration on European statistics and adjacent domains and its practical application which resulted in different steps of move 2, namely, raising cost awareness, cost efficiency and cost transparency in the finance sector,

enhancing job hunt for young specialists, accounting for sustainable growth and fighting poverty.

Programme 2 was put into practice from July to December 2014 and is the largest in volume (76 pages). The length of moves is also different. Although all the moves listed below have been observed, a heavy emphasis has been put on detailed representation of steps of move 3. Move 2, in its turn, outlines the following priorities as ensuring economic growth, democracy, equal rights and freedom as well as establishing robust foreign policy.

Programme 3 was operating from January to June 2015, with its priorities being the focus on economic governance and quality in statistics, aligned legal framework to the new institutional context. It was envisaged to complete dossiers on Rail and Inland transport statistics, Extrastat and ECB Recommendations and to achieve progress in Balance of Payments, International Trade in Services, and Foreign Direct Investment Regulation as well as finalise the proposals on Harmonised Indices of Consumer Prices Regulation and the Digital Single Market strategy, which is reflected in the steps of Move 2.

Programme 4 was implemented from July to December 2015 and demonstrates a slightly different move structure, namely, merging Move 2 and Move 3, hence claiming the priorities and proposing action points for each area. They outline stimulating investment, enhancing social environment, managing migration, combining freedom, justice and security, facilitating digital markets and European competitiveness in the international political and economic arena.

Programme 5, in force from January to July 2016, outlines the following priorities: robust finance and stable eurozone, innovations and job creation, managing migration and international security as well as climate change, which influences the steps of Move 2.

The summarised move structure is presented below:

Move 1: Introducing the presidency
Step 1: Describing the present situation
Step 2: Outlining the challenges
Step 3: Stating the aim of the Presidency programme and focusing on the essentials
Step 4: Outlining the connections among other presidencies and highlighting sustainable development

Move 2: Claiming the priorities of the presidency
Step 1: Outlining the approach to societal issues
Step 2: Highlighting the significance of innovations and employment issues
Step 3: Describing the financial situation
Step 4: Outlining the policy on environmental issues

Move 3: Presenting council configurations
Step 1: Describing changes, defining tasks and proposing solutions in
1. general affairs
2. foreign affairs (including defence, trade and development)
3. economic and financial affairs
4. justice and home affairs
5. employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs, competitiveness
6. transport, telecommunications and energy
7. agriculture and fisheries
8. environment
9. education, youth, culture and sport (Programmes 1–5)

The yielded data demonstrated various lengths of moves, different sequencing of steps and a different level of representation of details in each programme, which supports Biber's (1989) concern regarding the obscure relations between the communicative purpose and lexico-grammatical means and might also be explained by a relatively novel nature of the genre. However, the generic macro-structure of all the documents under analysis except programme 4 is rigid which is pertinent to meaning negotiation in institutional discourse. Luxembourg's programme, though, contains an example of merging Move 2 and Move 3, hence claiming the priorities and proposing action points for each area. The steps of Move 2 of other programmes also vary, depending on the presidency priorities for each particular country presiding over the Council of Europe.

The empirical results of the rhetorical organisation analysis (Trimble, 1985) also demonstrate its dependency on the communicative aim and consistency in all five programmes. For instance, the recurrent rhetorical patterns of Move 1 *Introducing the Presidency* comprise description for Step 1, enumeration, description and explanation for Step 2, definition, description, enumeration for Step 3 and description and chronological patterns for Step 4 respectively. Thus, as seen in examples 1 and 2 below, the communicative aim of Move 1 Step 1 presupposes the use of description to focus on the present social, economic and political environment:

1) Describing the present situation: It is a time when the European Union continues to face both long-term and immediate challenges to meet the needs of its citizens. (description, Programme 3);

2) This Presidency is taking place in an institutional environment that has changed substantially since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. (description, Programme 4).

Step 2 entails description, enumeration and explanation patterns in order to present the upcoming challenges as well as reasons as seen in example 3:

3) Outlining the challenges: The economic and financial crisis revealed the weaknesses in Europe's economic and monetary architecture. This link, between the sovereign and financial institutions, has not only created difficulties for the sovereign with the cost of bank rescues, but it also has implications for the supply of affordable credit to businesses and households. The EU economy simply cannot grow meaningfully unless investors and consumers have confidence in the Union's banking system and the regulatory architecture underpinning it. (description, explanation, Programme 1)

Example 4 illustrates the choice of rhetorical patterns for Move 1 Step 3 (description and enumeration), which is determined by the need to define the set aim and outline the objectives for its achievement:

4) Stating the aim of the Presidency programme and focusing on the essentials: The Luxembourg Presidency – committed to building a strong Europe as well as to the Union's values and principles – has opted for an open approach: listening to citizens, supporting businesses, collaborating with partners and institutions in order to act in the European interest. (description, enumeration, Programme 4)

5) This programme sets out the real and tangible decisions we will push for as Ireland chairs negotiations across nine different Council formations from January until June. Working together with our fellow Member states, the EU institutions and other stakeholders, the Irish Presidency will be that of a recovery country driving recovery in Europe. (description, Programme 1)

The following step requires description and chronological patterns in order to present the mainstream directions for sustainable development consistent with the actions of other 'trio' member states, which is seen in example 6:

6) Outlining the connections among other presidencies and highlighting sustainable development: In the light of the challenges and tensions described above, it is crucial to focus on making connections during the Netherlands Presidency. First of all, that entails making connections between member states, because mutual solidarity forms the basis of European cooperation. Even when times are tough, member states must collectively take responsibility. In this way we can stand up for each other and be stronger together. Another important connection, however, is that between the European Union and its citizens. [...] This is the Netherlands Presidency's national programme looking ahead to the coming six months. It naturally ties in closely with the trio programme presented by the heads of government of the trio comprising the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta on 16 December 2015. (description and chronological patterns, Programme 5)

The results obtained for other moves do not show high variation, namely, the steps of Move 2 differ due to the change of priorities for presiding countries, constituting optional steps (Biber, Connor and Upton, 2007); however, the choice of the rhetorical pattern is stable, i.e. description. The member state officials describe the priorities and actions to be taken, as seen in example 7:

> 7) Describing the financial situation: The third priority concerns the Presidency's focus on sound, future-proof European finances and a robust eurozone. After a deep crisis, recovery has now set in. Structural reforms and sound fiscal policy are bearing fruit and many member states are gradually finding their way to economic recovery and rising employment. (Programme 5)

The yielded data of Move 3 reflect three recurrent rhetorical patterns, namely, description, explanation and chronological patterns which are used to describe the actions undertaken in every domain, explain their rationale and relate consistently to those of other member states in the 'trio', as presented in example 8:

> 8) The Luxembourg Presidency concluded the negotiations on the Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) on Better Regulation. The Netherlands Presidency will table the implementation of the measures agreed in the IIA, including key provisions on annual programming, in the General Affairs Council. This means the provisions of the IIA will need to be developed and applied, both within the Council itself and in its work with the Commission and the European Parliament. (description, explanation and chronological patterns, Programme 4)

To summarise the findings, despite the fact that the EU Presidency programme is a relatively new genre, it demonstrates a stable generic macro-structure, which might be explained by the requirements and the peculiarities of meaning negotiation of institutional discourse. The variation of optional steps is applicable only as determined by the communicative aim.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research results suggest that the generic macro-structure of the EU presidency programmes is rigid, contributing to genre integrity. It largely reflects the emergence of a new discursive and social practice, i.e. the presidency as well as presents it is a structured way and highlights the centrality of the communicative aim pertinent to this genre. The present study provides additional evidence with respect to the rhetorical structures concerning each move, among which consistency is observed. The most common discourse unit is description. The genre is stabilised for now, characterised by the colony of reporting genres performing the transactional language metafunction. The variation of steps is evident in Move 2 and is related to different priorities for each presidency.

The results of the present study are yielded from a relatively small corpus. Therefore, the generalisation should be applied with caution. It is recommended that further research be undertaken and the move and step analysis is applied to a more extensive corpus. Moreover, since the results of the situational context modelling demonstrate other genres of the communicative event to reflect other discursive practices, intertextual and interdiscursive relation among them might be investigated. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of lexico-grammatical features might be suggested as the preliminary screening revealed the use of different tense forms in the same steps.

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