ANALYSING GENRE:
THE COLONY TEXT OF UNESCO RESOLUTIONS
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The book *Analysing Genre: The Colony Text of UNESCO Resolutions* brings to the fore the diplomatic discourse of UNESCO resolutions, a still unexploited field of research in communication and discourse studies. Diplomatic communication is said to be "the site of an intricate multi-cultural institutional dialogue that opens a path towards the solving of international conflicts and the reaching of agreement in international affairs" (Dontcheva 2009: 1). As a highly-specialized professional genre, UNESCO resolutions stem from a complex process of encoding and decoding context-dependent communicative purposes and strategy-oriented meanings, in which text-production is the outcome of careful negotiation between the members of a collective authorship. The discourse of the UNESCO reflects such specialized professional practices in that discourse is characterized by internal organization, conventionalization and stability of form.

Conceived as a piece of genre-based research, *Analysing Genre: The Colony Text of UNESCO Resolutions* explores the set of linguistic features which are typically associated with UNESCO resolutions, such as text organization, lexicogrammatical and semantic choices, information processing and cohesive relations. Its primary aim is to study text typology and stylistic variation with the objective of examining the impact of situational context on generic structure, a goal which is successfully met by combining the theoretical support of sociolinguistics, stylistics and pragmatics. The research undertakes the ambitious task of studying the effect of

situational context on generic structure from both the synchronic and diachronic view point in an attempt to observe any visible signs of the development of this genre over the last sixty years. In this spirit, the book is primarily concerned with the analysis of two major themes. On the one hand, the research addresses the socio-cultural context of UNESCO as an international governmental organization and how this particular professional setting may play a role in the way the institution shapes discourse structure and preconditions generic variation. On the other, the study is interested in examining the colony text-type on discourse organization in connection with diachronic variations. This approach proves to be relevant as it gives an indication of the historical development of the genre and its dynamism.

Chapter 1 opens with a broad-brush preface in which Dontcheva-Navratilova anticipates a number of the fundamental principles on which the research draws. Chapter 2 discusses some of the key concepts and methodological issues that have concerned genre studies over the last thirty years. In her examination of genre, style markers of genres and colony texts, the author clarifies the functional perspective that shapes the analysis. Language is, thus, perceived as a system of meaning potential (Halliday 1979) where meaning is negotiated and recreated by the interactants (Mey 1991). The research conceptualizes genre as meaning carrier, that is, as a set of discursive choices which consistently correlate with particular communicative circumstances in a field (Fowler 1986). Genre's prototypicallity allows readers to decode particular sets of linguistic choices enabling a specific set of communicative intentions. The author also reviews existing literature on legal, political and diplomatic language. Informative as these sections are, one may nevertheless be inclined to think that the research should have included important references such as Maley (1994, 2000), Tiersma (1999, 2002) and Bhatia (2004, 2008), and that it could have benefited from examining of the discursive elements of strategy (Vaara et al. 2004; Pälli et. al. 2009) to explain the alignment of contemporary institutions such as UNESCO with *strategic* social welfare. This framework could have provided a fine-grained contextualization of the communicative purposes of the UNESCO discursive community, or as Geertz (2007) puts it, a thick description of the context in which a text is produced. The contextualization of UNESCO resolutions is included in Chapter 3, which establishes four functional criteria (i.e. situational parameters, discourse participants, communicative purposes and communicative conventions) to identify the value of the situational variables responsible for the rhetorical structure and the set of linguistic options in the process of text production. Within this interpretative framework and drawing on concepts such as context of situation, communicative events, politeness, cohesion and coherence, clause relations and intertextuality, the author undertakes the analysis of the genre of UNESCO resolutions. Chapter 4 shows from a diachronic and synchronic viewpoint that UNESCO discourse has gradually codified its

communicative practices and discourse processing procedures. In the first section of this chapter, Dontcheva-Navratilova draws on diachronic studies to discuss the inclination of UNESCO discourse towards formal codification and professional accommodation. Her approach reveals that this type of intergovernmental institutional communication is characterized by particularly recurrent lexical phrases and syntactic structures which may be said to be prototypical of the legal discourse (i.e. functional structure and organization of discourse, unambiguity and all-inclusiveness), but interestingly enough, it is precisely the conventionalized reliance on these elements that establishes a gradual delimitation of the genre of resolutions as distinct from the legal register. In the second section of the chapter, Dontcheva-Navratilova proves that UNESCO discourse is a highly structured and codified genre and focuses on three major aspects of genre-based analysis: generic structure potential, structure of rhetorical moves and intrageneric variation. In an attempt to provide a holistic and comprehensive analysis of the discourse of UNESCO Resolutions, this section also considers stylistic aspects of formal written institution discourse, recurrent syntactic patterns in adverbial structures, clause patterns and verb complementation, cohesion and coherence. Chapter 5 ends this genre-based analysis by presenting some concluding remarks concerning the theoretical framework, the results of the practical study. It also suggests some directions for further research, including the application of this functional framework to diplomatic communication, the refinement of methodology and the analysis of different aspects of intercultural communication such as cross-cultural pragmatic strategies, coherence and dispute resolution strategies.

The research presented in the book is not only the result of the author's long-term involvement in the study of the genre under scrutiny, as the author suggests, but the result of significant research, thorough enquiry and, above all, strong commitment and dedication. This is why experienced and novel linguists may find it useful. Experienced researchers will encounter compelling arguments for the discussion of UNESCO diplomatic discourse, particularly in regard to its textualization and its generic variation. Furthermore, a study of these characteristics may assist young researchers in recognizing unexploited scholar sites of engagement, set out the guidelines for further linguistic analysis and inculcate those operationalized professional requirements necessary to interpret discourse and foster critical, and reflective scientific thinking. Of special relevance for them may be the clarifying glossary of terms included in the book. Dontcheva-Navratilova presents an inclusive, comprehensive examination of the textualization of UNESCO resolutions with sufficient evidence of the appropriateness of genre-based studies in diplomatic discourse. A minor drawback could be that the research's emphasis on the textualization of discourse often overshadows the equally relevant contribution of contextual elements partly responsible for UNESCO discursive

choices. This relative lack of attention paid to the contextualization of discourse is a shortcoming which could be rectified, for example, by placing greater emphasis on the discussion of the closed-set parameters included in the model for contextual analysis of genre (Chapter 2) or by discussing the significance of relevant aspects such as intertextuality, interdiscursivity and hybridization in the text-production process.

To conclude, this research offers us a valuable, well-founded and innovative analysis whose main strength underlines the need to advance in the study of the situational context on generic structure of UNESCO intergovernmental diplomatic discourse.

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