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Dilemmas of *online video review* genre: An attempt at describing genre complexity in Polish and German linguistics

**Rozterki genologiczne wokół wideorecenzji publikowanych online.
Próba opisu zawłości gatunkowych
z perspektywy polonistyczno-germanistycznej**

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to examine the changes in the genre pattern of *review* resulting from its expansion to a new online communication medium, i.e. the YouTube platform. The case study of two video reviews comprising four levels of analysis (structural, pragmatic, thematic-cognitive and stylistic) aims to compare the canonical version of the arts review and its modern online variants. The authors attempt to determine whether online video film reviews could be regarded as manifestations of the *review* genre evolution, intermedial adaptation, its genre pattern transformation, or – perhaps – the development of a distinct genre, characteristic of online communication only. Contrastive analysis based on selected methods of Polish linguistic genre studies applied in the context of German text type linguistics is intended to extend the scope of the ongoing research on genre with aspects of Polish and German research perspectives.

Keywords: genre studies, text type, text pattern, video review, Polish-German contrastive linguistics

Abstrakt

Artykuł ma na celu uchwycenie zmian gatunkowych w obrębie wzorca gatunkowego *recenzji*, wynikających z jej ekspansji do nowego medium – platformy internetowej YouTube. Bazująca na korpusie analiza egzemplaryczna wybranych wideorecenzji, przeprowadzona na płaszczyźnie strukturalnej, pragmatycznej, tematyczno-poznawczej i stylistycznej, ma na celu porównanie kanonicznej formy recenzji artystycznej z formami

prezentowanymi współcześnie online. Autorki próbują rozstrzygnąć, czy wideorecenzje filmów można uznać za przykład ewolucji gatunku, adaptacji do nowego medium, transformacji wzorca gatunkowego recenzji, czy też wykształcenia się nowego, odrębnego gatunku, charakterystycznego tylko dla komunikacji internetowej. Analiza kontrastyczna oparta o wybrane metody polonistycznej genologii lingwistycznej oraz germanistyczne podejścia z zakresu lingwistyki rodzajów tekstu ma na celu wzbogacenie dyskusji naukowej na temat gatunku o elementy polonistycznej i germanistycznej perspektywy badawczej.

Słowa kluczowe: genologia lingwistyczna, gatunek, rodzaj tekstu, wideorecenzja, wzorzec tekstu, językoznawstwo kontrastywne

1. Introduction

Modern textual instantiations of genre patterns seem to be less and less closely connected with their prototypes, deviating from the canonical pattern, if any. In communication practice, increasingly common phenomena are *alternative* or *adaptive variants* of the pattern, as defined by Maria Wojtak (2004: 18)¹. According to Ulla Fix, a researcher in German genre studies, the so-called “breaking the canon”² occurs, manifest in the cases of *montage of textual patterns*, *mixture of textual patterns*, or *breaking the pattern* (Fix 1997: 97)³. Alterations of textual pattern instances through deviation from their generic norms (what Fix describes as the *mixture of textual patterns*) are defined by Hartmut Lenk (2012: 163) as *extensions of a textual pattern*. In modern instances of textual patterns one faces so-called *hybrids* or *hybrid constructs*, which stem from “genre crossing” – according to Wojtak (2004: 19)⁴.

¹ According to Wojtak, the canonical version of a genre pattern comprises the most constant structural, pragmatic and stylistic quantifiers that determine the genre identity. Alternative genre patterns “are formed as a result of a transformation of individual elements of the canonical pattern” (Wojtak 2004: 18). Adaptive patterns, in turn, are related to “external genre patterns” (ibidem).

² Translations from German and Polish here – A.H. and A.K.

³ In the original: *Musterbruch*, *Textmistermischung*, *Textmustermontage* (Fix 1997: 97). Note that in German linguistics, *text pattern* (Ger. *Textmuster*) is distinct from its Polish equivalent (Pol. *wzorzec tekstu*), used synonymously with *genre*. According to German studies, Ger. *Textmuster* [‘text pattern’] denotes an abstract model, ideal text archetype, which contains only the most essential and typical traits (Heinemann 2009), while Ger. *Textsorten* [‘text types’] are related to the concrete textual instantiations of the pattern; they may display traits that are either more or less typical of a certain text type. In this article, the term *genre* is applied to both literary and non-literary (utilitarian) texts (including reviews).

⁴ Yet, Wojtak (2004) does not define *hybrid*, nor does she specify the link between a *hybrid* and variant patterns, esp. the adaptive variant. In German research on press text there have been few attempts to define *hybridization* and *hybrid*. An interesting view is offered by Hartmut Lenk: “If the patterns of two different types of text are mixed so

The loosening and change of the genre pattern, as described above, have also affected the *review*. Previously a domain of experts, this genre is now – due to the Internet – gradually attracting any interested members of the language community.

This paper sets out to assess whether oral presentations of films, conveying interpretation and evaluation thereof, available as videos on YouTube, can be classified as another step in the evolution of the *review* genre. Should this phenomenon be viewed as a case of genre evolution, genre intermedial adaptation or transformation of the genre pattern? Or, is this, perhaps, one more genre variety to be distinguished?

To identify the current tendencies in the development of the *review* genre, a contrastive analysis of online video reviews has been conducted based on the corpus material made of 50 video reviews by amateur critics (the *Sfilmowani* series) and 25 video reviews by a professional film critic (Tomasz Raczek's channel), posted from May to December 2019⁵. The analysis has been carried out on four levels (**structural, pragmatic, thematic/cognitive** and **stylistic**), using the model proposed by Wojtak (2019). Her model has been extended with an **analysis of language actions**, in line with the long-standing tradition of German linguistic research in the field.

The attempt to describe and classify genre complexity from the perspective of Polish and German language studies undertaken here, using selected methods of Polish linguistic genre studies and German text linguistics, is intended to enhance the discussion on complex genre issues⁶.

evidently that one can speak of an adoption of a different textual pattern in a certain text, such a phenomenon can be defined as *hybridization*" (Lenk 2012: 163). In turn, textual pattern mixing occurring within specific text types is to him a *hybrid* (Lenk 2015). His examples point to the sender's actions, deliberately (to a large extent) meant to attract the recipient's attention. His definition of *hybrid* resembles Wojtak's (2004), but it also corresponds with the definitions of the "montage of textual patterns" and "mixture of textual patterns" proposed by Fix (1997), which may imply that it is a category superordinate to both the terms.

⁵ There are 118 reviews uploaded on Raczek's channel and 541 on the *Sfilmowani* channel [retrieved: 25.08.2021]. See the References for the addresses.

⁶ Note that linguistic research on the genre is hardly present in the Anglophone discourse. In older publications on this subject in English, genre-related issues are mainly discussed in the practical context of translation studies, pragmatics, communication and discourse analysis. The term *texts types* – used with reference to functional texts – has been adopted from German studies (Ger. *Textsorten*) to denote "textual entities used in pragmatic and semantic analysis of texts from a functional point of view" (see, e.g. Kussmaul 1995: 72; Clyne 1994: 166–167). Nowadays, language communication researchers prefer a dynamic approach to genre (referred to as *text type* or *genre*), considering it "as being a culturally, socially, linguistically and multimodally significant entity" (see Engberg et al. 2014: 7).

2. Characteristics of *arts review*, including *film review*

In German linguistic research on the review the main object of genre analysis are literary reviews, which, in turn, form the basis for further attempts to determine the distinctive features of other arts reviews, including film reviews. Since film criticism is closely related to literary criticism – as observed by Krauz (2015: 292), who examines the plot, contents and ideological background of the works in both media – the parameters applied to literary reviews can be adopted to film analyses, and then complemented with distinctive features of film reviews. They mainly concern the film language, whose interpretation requires a film expert's competence and comprehensive knowledge of many disciplines, not necessarily related to linguistics.

A vast majority of German linguists studying the generic features of literary reviews (and arts reviews) stress that these features include **constitutive** ones (characteristic of all the reviews discussed), **facultative** ones (occurring irregularly, but whose absence does not exclude a given text from the *review* genre), and **typical** ones (frequently found in reviews, but not regarded for typological purposes), as in e.g. Stegert (1997). For most researchers, the constitutive features of the review involve specific language actions. The most common ones are: **INFORMING** [Ger. *INFORMIEREN*] and **ASSESSING/EVALUATING** [Ger. *BEWERTEN*], which comprise **COMPARING**, **ASSIGNING ATTRIBUTES**, **EXPLAINING**, **INTERPRETING**, **ARGUING**, **PRAISING**, **CRITICISING**, **RECOMMENDING**, **DISCOURAGING**, **WEIGHING THE PROS AND CONS**, **DISPUTING**, **ACCUSING** and **DEFENDING** (Bachmann-Stein, Stein 2014: 88). Stegert (1997) questions this classification and provides empirical evidence that a review does not have to contain the two above-quoted language actions, but it must contain at least two complex actions, composed of at least two simple actions (in his terminology). An overwhelming consensus among German linguists can be observed as regards another constitutive feature of the review, classified as one of the situational criteria (Zillig 1982), i.e. its being a **public form of mass media communication** (in the press, radio, TV), addressed at a **broad audience** (Stegert 1997; Zillig 1982).

According to Lüger (1995), another defining element of the arts review may be its **thematic restriction**, which restricts the scope of the review to the cultural products aimed at certain recipients (Lüger 1995; Stegert 1997). Moreover, there is a **temporal restriction**, also referred to by Lüger (1995), since a review can appear only after watching, reading or listening to a given work (Stegert 1997).

In Polish research on arts review, the emphasis is put on its specific structure, which includes the following: an informative part, containing a summary and the authors' biodata, an evaluation, supported with logical arguments and subjective opinions on the text, as well as some elements of persuasion (Krauz 2016: 131). Wolny-Zmorzyński et al. (2006: 98) discern the following constitutive features of the review: a general presentation of the artist and his/her work, including the information about the year of issue (if the work is a written one), the number of pages, etc., a discussion of the contents, an evaluation of the work, and the conclusions, in which the critic recommends or rejects the work. They also point to **topicality** (ibidem) as a principle applicable to any review that they classify as a form of *art criticism*. As to the purposes of a review, they state it should inform about the work, evaluate it, shape the audience's tastes and contain a critical reflection, which involves analysing the structure of the work and discussing it in the context of the current artistic movements, other works by the author, as well as political and social phenomena (ibidem). Unlike German linguists, they do not focus on the language actions (e.g. evaluating and/or informing), but on the purposes of a review. Neither do they distinguish between constitutive, characteristic (though facultative) and typical actions as regards the features of a review. However, they stress that even a most compact review informs its readers and, usually, evaluates the work, while a more elaborate one also attempts to shape the recipients' tastes. Referring to a critical reflection, Polish scholars claim that this purpose is fulfilled by the reviews in the specialized thematic media. Hence, they make only an indirect reference to constitutive and characteristic actions.

At this point, the question arises how (in the context of art reviews) to treat the so called *video reviews*, i.e. the *entities*⁷ that take by storm the Internet streaming platforms, such as YouTube, and are posted by both expert and amateur critics.

Little can be found on the characteristics of the *video review* in the specialist literature on the subject (cf. Jarosz 2021): some attempts to describe the video review have been made by Brendel-Perpina (2019), Brendel-Perpina, Reidelshöfer (2019) and Jarosz (2021). Yet, internet videos can be assumed to share the following specific characteristics:

⁷ We use the term *entity* as an equivalent of the German terms *Entität*, or *Größe*, in the sense of 'entity, being'. Here, it refers to unspecified genre forms found in online communication (cf. Hanus, Kaczmarek 2022: 218).

- (1) multimodal simultaneity of the moving picture; voice-over; additional explanatory captions, vital for grasping the message [Ger. *Schrift-Insert*]; animated graphics; audio-visual elements;
- (2) universal online accessibility;
- (3) relatively compact volume (Glaserapp, Rouget 2016: 213f.).

According to Ina Brendel-Perpina, who devotes an entire monograph (2019) to evaluating literary works online, expert film reviews are part of specific TV news blocks (cf. e.g. *ZEIT online*). They are characterized by a lack of bilateral communication, compact volume (3–5 minutes) and focus on only renowned authors' works. Also, message credibility is to be guaranteed by the eminent critics invited to the programme (cf. e.g. Grieshop 2015).

Brendel-Perpina (2019) also attempts to describe the video reviews of literary texts posted by amateur critics on the BookTube channel, pointing to their characteristic features: a specific direct form of greeting the audience, emphatically dynamic delivery, excessive gesturing, spontaneity of expression, improvisation, frequent thematic digressions, as well as unprofessional production and editing.

As to their structure, the introductory section contains the information about the author, the publisher, the price, etc. The most substantial section is devoted to an analysis of the work itself, coupled with numerous emotional personal comments, preparing the viewers for the final evaluation of the work (closing the video). An amateur video review always ends with an invitation to post comments (Brendel-Perpina 2019: 523).

The scarcity of the research on video reviews, especially of films, and (as far as the authors know) the complete absence of any studies on expert video reviews of films necessitates detailed analyses to form some general conclusions on the online video review.

3. Contrastive analysis of the research material

To indicate the parallels and differences between the canonical version of the arts review and its current online variants, as well as outline the regularities and changes introduced by this new variety to the classic review, a case study is shown below of two types of online video reviews: an expert and an amateur one. The contrastive analysis that follows is to examine the most characteristic features of both types of the current instances of the video review so as to determine the nature of the changes occurring within the genre pattern (or, perhaps, the media format) of the *review*.

3.1. Form and structure of the video review – a structural analysis

The subject of the analysis are two video reviews of the film *Parasite*, a 2019 South Korean black comedy thriller directed by Bong Joon-ho. It has won numerous awards, including the Palme d'Or at 2019 Cannes Film Festival, and four Academy Awards at the 2020 Oscars. One video review (in the *Sfilmowani* series) is available on the channel run by non-professional critics under the patronage of the Gutek-Film company, a leading film distributor in Poland. The other one is by Tomasz Raczek, a renowned Polish film and theatre critic, presented on his own channel where he discusses the recently released films. In line with the YouTube regulations, both videos are coupled with the information on their upload date and the number of views. In both cases, the viewers have an opportunity to post their comments on the video viewed. The following information is displayed below Raczek's review: uploaded on 13 September 2019, with 138,984 views [retrieved: 30.08.2022]. The other review is supplied with the following data: uploaded on 06 September 2019, with 154,207 views [retrieved: 30.08.2022].

Raczek's video review was recorded in a home setting, possibly in his own home studio. He is shown in the foreground, in close-up. The other review introduces the speakers unknown to broader audience, who broadcast their review from a studio specially designed for this purpose, which they emphasize in a remark on their attempts to improve the acoustics. The film is discussed by two presenters, whose surnames are not revealed to the viewers. Their first names and contact addresses are the only information shown on an inserted caption stripe. The reviewers are captured in alternate close-up or medium close-up.

Raczek's video review is constructed mostly in a static way. The video, 25:45 minutes long, is a direct online presentation by the critic. This convention is interrupted only by two short clips from the *Parasite* trailer. Lengthwise, the other review is twice shorter (12:53 minutes), although it is indeed compact content-wise. This aspect is also indicated by the pace of speech. Pauses for thought are very rare here: the reviewers do not ponder on the contents, and present arguments with great confidence. Their presentation is illustrated with numerous movie clips. The audience thus face a simultaneous multimodal presentation of moving image and voice-over commentary.

In the expert video review, Raczek does not make any unnecessary movements, however slight. The amateurs gesticulate wildly to stress their

points, which makes an impression of uncoordinated or chaotic movements, getting out of control at times.

The analysis of the structure of both communication acts shows that both videos have been given a title, but neither of the titles is original. Moreover, it is not clear which information should be considered as the title proper of the video review. On the title still of the expert review there is a graphic design with the critic's name. The amateur review does not have a title still. In both video reviews the information perceived as a title appears under the videos (above the comments). It is not clear whether it has been supplied by the reviewers themselves, or by the website designers. The title of Raczek's review contains the information about the film discussed and the director's name. The amateurs' review has been given the title: "*Parasite* – the Best Film of the Year? Review #500". It does not mention the director's name, the country or the production year, while the expert one omits the element of RECOMMENDING/EVALUATING. Neither review specifies the film details (the cast, country of production, music, author of the screenplay). Both have a three-part structure. The amateur review is preceded by the acknowledgements of the "patrons", i.e. the implied sponsors and donors supporting the channel, whose names are listed in the film frame.

The opening of Raczek's presentation is followed by a part of the official film trailer, which separates this section from the review proper. A similar technique is applied in the non-expert review, although the film footage appears repeatedly, parallel to the reviewers' voice-over comments. In the main part of the amateurs' review, after the opening, there is a brief plot synopsis, which (according to them) provides a summary of the first 20 minutes of the film, in observance (as they claim) of its director's request not to reveal the plot – which is counter-intuitive and goes against the general principles of composing a review. After the description of the film comes an evaluative part, in which the reviewers alternately present their unambiguously positive opinions on the film and its makers, stressing its most fascinating aspects. Their exchange of opinions, however, hardly resembles a discussion, and their approving comments are not based on any supporting arguments.

In Raczek's review, the section defined as the review proper is entirely different from the one offered by the amateurs. His film description is masterfully intertwined with evaluation and interpretation. The conclusions are singled out distinctly in both video reviews, which is even signalled by the metalanguage applied. In both cases, this section is preceded by short footage (a clip or trailer) from the film. In the conclusive section, the reviewers

pronounce their ultimate verdict, which in both cases is explicitly positive. Raczek rates the film 9 out of 10, while the amateurs assign it their highest rating, i.e. 6 out of 6 stars.

3.2. Sender-receiver situation and language actions – a pragmatic analysis

An important element of the pragmatic analysis of a text is to determine the sender-receiver situation of the communication partners. In one example, we meet Tomasz Raczek, an established expert literary and film critic. Despite the complex form of his message, laden with subtext and implied meanings, the sender seems to be targeting a broad variety of receivers, which is proved with the numerous comments posted under the review on his YouTube channel. These comments are extremely positive, yet they reflect their authors' varied stylistic competence and knowledge.

In the other example analysed, the message senders are people in their twenties, rather inexperienced in literary or film criticism, as can be inferred from their comments. Neither do they show any specialist knowledge in literature, culture or arts. Moreover, they do not care about the correct style: their language is unsophisticated, often marked with grammatical and stylistic mistakes. Their message is addressed to young mass audience with unrefined tastes, well-familiar with Polish teenage slang strewn with American English expressions.

In both video reviews, the following **complex language actions** are clearly distinguishable: INFORMING AND RECOMMENDING. At the beginning of his review, Raczek recommends South Korean cinema to ordinary audience, not only to ardent film aficionados:

even those who think they aren't interested in Asian cinema [...]. Everyone should watch this film, even though they say they saw a Korean movie once and didn't like it, although I would be surprised [...] or they've never seen any Korean film.

In the next section, the critic INFORMS [the audience], using such simple language actions as STORYTELLING, EXPLAINING and INTERPETING. Raczek INFORMS the audience that this movie is a combination of many different genres. He also EXPLAINS what kind of film it is, EXPLAINS and ARGUES why the film can be viewed as a *fable* or *parable*, and interprets its message. He COMPARES the film director to the Brothers Grimm, whose fables are also scary at times. He WARNS the audience against too shallow reception of the film: "You can make a fool of yourself saying you don't understand the movie". Then, he EXPLAINS: "This film is tricky.

It is not a shallow movie, so you can't stay on the surface". He INTERPRETS the film's message and the intentions of its sender. He draws the viewers' attention to the fact that this film tells us about ourselves – who we are and what we want. He POINTS TO social differences, the fearful gap between those who "have" and those who "have not". He MAKES REFERENCES to Marx, Pandora's box and the current situation in Poland. He MAKES the audiences AWARE and EXPLAINS to them that the film director has not created a morality play, which he SUPPORTS WITH ARGUMENTS and ILLUSTRATES WITH EXAMPLES to be regarded as parables, like the very film discussed. In numerous passages, he EXPLAINS the movie's inner complexities. When SUMMING UP, he repeats that the film is a parable told in a simple, light-hearted way. The above-mentioned evidence can easily prove that in Raczek's review the (complex) action of INFORMING involves a wide array of simple actions that constitute it. Complex actions are ASSESSING/EVALUATING, which is usually done indirectly, through DESCRIBING and INTERPRETING, as well as GIVING EXAMPLES. In the conclusive section one can find EXPLICIT EVALUATION. The critic openly expresses his fascination with the film and admiration for the director: "[...] this resembles a Fabergé egg. It is a masterpiece of art. [...] Therefore, I give it nine out of ten points".

In the non-expert review, just as in Raczek's review, one encounters two main actions, i.e. INFORMING and ASSESSING/EVALUATING, which both are complex language actions. At the very outset, the reviewers INFORM the audience that they are not going to reveal too many plot details, as that was the film director's request. Their INFORMING involves DESCRIBING and EXPLAINING. However, the informative content is often mixed with EVALUATING. One reviewer even makes IRONIC COMMENTS on the plot. After a short plot overview, further actions follow: WARNING against "spoiling" the movie (i.e. revealing important plot developments to the viewers who have not watched the film yet) and even INSTRUCTING/ORDERING them to "crucify" anyone daring to post such spoilers in his/her comment. The reviewers occasionally MAKE REFERENCES to other art works, and pass IRONIC COMMENTS on the condition of Polish cinema. In the conclusive section, besides ASSESSING, other actions can be found, such as RECOMMENDING and POINTING TO DRAWBACKS.

To sum up, the amateur review contains many examples of mixed forms of the actions described above, which consist in the alternation of informative and evaluative actions. Notably, many evaluative actions are intertwined with informative ones. As to ASSESSING/EVALUATING, a clear shift of emphasis occurs from content-based evaluation, through evaluation based on individual

criteria, to that based on the critic's elusive subjective experience. The most common is the alternate occurrence of the INFORMING action, in its variant that can be labelled as (THE CRITIC'S) INFORMING the audiences ON THE WORK'S RECEPTION, and ASSESSING/EVALUATING BASED ON THE CRITIC'S OWN EMOTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE WORK REVIEWED (Petkova-Kessanlis (2013); Bachmann-Stein, Stein (2014); Hanus, Kaczmarek (2022); Hanus (2023)).

3.3. Cognitive aspect – a thematic analysis

The cognitive aspect of the material examined here involves a description of the text's subject matter and presentation manner, which reflect the message senders' view of the world and its assessment (Wojtak 2019).

The non-expert reviewers address their message to young audience and prospective sponsors of their projects. They start their message with the information about their studio and the progress of the work on making it fully professional. Then come the acknowledgements of the "patrons" who support the online series, including the main sponsor. Stressing their own experience, which is important image-wise, the reviewers inform their audience that this is the 500th video in the series. In the next section they present the film and its director. Adding variety to their message, they show some footage of Bong Joon-ho's current output. The film is shown as very attractive. The critics praise the director's masterful command of various genres, evident in how he combines elements of black comedy, social drama and thriller to produce a coherent whole, while the film itself both amuses and scares the audience. This variety is intended to attract young viewers to the cinema, which is also the reviewers' objective. They make references to frequent twists and turns of the plot that will astonish the audience, the absence of redundant content or images, as well as the universal topic. Hoping to reach young audience, unaccustomed to the reception of art, they discuss the film in a slightly broader context of South Korean cinema, stressing that this one is much easier in reception than other Korean films. They also inform the audience that despite the subtitles (neither Polish dubbing nor voice-over is available) it is worth making the effort to watch the film. The critics are also concerned with the technical aspects of the film (camera work, photography, suspense and the absence of redundant scenes). Finally, the verdict is announced, pointing to the film's minor drawbacks. This video review ends with the information on a viewer competition announced by the Gutek Film company.

The expert video review is attuned to the tastes of a wide variety of viewers. In his interpretation of the film, Raczek carefully chooses the contents of particular sections so as to find the most appropriate words and images appealing both to cinema experts and uneducated viewers. He attempts to prove the value of the movie at the very outset, making references to the prestigious awards it has won. Then, he gives a detailed explanation of the genres relevant to the film and the nature of its reception. The film itself is discussed with a focus on its main strands of meaning and the director's message. The critic tries to unveil some of the artist's intentions by offering suggestive examples that constitute sort of parables resembling those created by the director. To attract less sophisticated audience, Raczek draws examples from his own life. Although he seems to make many digressions, he consistently develops his arguments as to the film's content, subject matter and message.

3.4. Language of the video review – a stylistic analysis

Both video reviews show attempts to recreate the language and style of the film discussed, which is a combination of art-house cinema with entertainment. They both contain traits of colloquial style, as they are addressed to a wide audience, yet there are significant differences, resulting from the different levels of the presenters' erudition. The expert review is a typical example of an artistic style, delivered in a poetic and metaphorical language. The critic frequently refers to other texts of culture, including both film and literature. Unlike the expert review, the amateur review is marked by a colloquial style, with numerous colloquialisms and slang expressions – the style most appropriate for everyday communication, meant to attract a wide audience.

Intertextuality is an important element of style. Ewa Kozłowska distinguishes three basic types of intertextual relations: *a text-in-text construction* (a quote or allusion), *a critical relation* (comments in one text on another), and *references to general principles the text was based on* (Kozłowska 2003: 115). In the expert review various types of intertextual relations can be found. Besides direct allusions and quotes from other films, it also contains literary allusions. The review contains indirect comments on other literary texts (Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Wyspiański, fairytales by Andersen and the Brothers Grimm). A characteristic feature of his presentation is its symbolic and figurative language. Mythological references, such as a "demon in Pandora's box", are interspersed with references to modern functional

art (e.g. a luxury rubbish bin), and open the space for the critic's personal digressions and childhood memories, as well as the present-day readings of the film.

In contrast to the expert review, containing a wide array of intertextual relations, the amateurs hardly ever refer to other works of art. Their review includes references to some South Korean films (*Burning*, *Shoplifters*), but the parallels are limited to textual and thematic analyses. The reviewers remark that *Parasite* is a mixture of film genres (black comedy, social drama, thriller), but they utterly ignore literary references. They also neglect a variety of symbols present in the movie, scarcely noticing them or oversimplifying their meaning.

The expert's talk has a precise and logical structure, designed to follow a clear formal concept, founded on the principle of unity of form and subject matter, typical of a work of art. The critic refers to the general principles (of a fable or parable) the film reviewed is built on. There are clear structural parallels between the review and the film itself. Although it is aimed at a sophisticated audience, the casual manner and light-hearted style make the review accessible to average viewers, opening their minds to multiple cognitive levels of the work discussed. The expert involves the audience in the dialogue of texts, but his own voice is predominant, as his argument is supported with thorough factual knowledge.

Considering the precision and logic of the argument, the amateur review is an example of a colloquial style, typical of young people, rich in idioms, swearwords, irony and jokes, as well as informal vocabulary with strong emotional appeal. The talk is based on the dialogue between two speakers, intended to make their narrative more dynamic by weighing pros and cons. However, the argument lacks balance and consistency, as both reviewers stress the numerous advantages of the work discussed, while few minute drawbacks are mentioned, somewhat perfunctorily, only at the end. The style of their utterances is chaotic and inconsistent, while the flow of speech is interrupted by numerous interpolations, repetitions and empty redundant phrases, e.g. *just*, *say*, *generally*, *sort of*. Their language teeters on the edge of the linguistic norm, containing numerous vulgar expressions and colloquialisms (even swearwords), e.g. "a real smasher of a movie", "what the f*** is going on here?". Using such a style results from addressing young mass audience with unsophisticated tastes. Their language also contains numerous unnecessary borrowings from English, which appear in their original form (e.g. *set-up*, *vocal*, *timing*), or are adapted to Polish grammar (e.g. *zaspojluje*, which is the third person singular of the English verb *spoil*, as in *to spoil a movie*).

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the research material shows that the main **generic features** of the review specified by Zillig (1982) and Lüger (1995) are preserved in both instances of the video review. Both forms contain basic language actions, INFORMING the viewers of the work in question and ASSESSING/EVALUATING it. Both video reviews contain the three basic structural components introduced in the theoretical part of this paper. In both cases, there are language actions of RECOMMENDING (or, possibly, REJECTING) the work, which are additional to the constitutive features of the review. Moreover, the research material contains the reviewers' self-promotional actions, which are not constitutive – though, admittedly, *characteristic* (see Hanus, Kaczmarek 2022; Hanus 2023) – of the *review* genre.

The analysis undeniably shows a deviation of both forms from the canonical pattern of the *review*. Both genre instances contain the traits characteristic of a mixture of genre patterns (Ger. *Textmuster Mischung*), as defined by Fix (1997), and those of the extension of the genre, as described by Lenk (2015). A mixture of genre patterns is indicated here by a combination of the generic features of the *review* with the constitutive features of the *advertisement*, or – in the amateur review – even elimination of the elements of a critical analysis or reflection. The actions of RECOMMENDING/DISCOURAGING, non-constitutive (yet characteristic) of the review, appear in both forms (though limited only to RECOMMENDING), as well as the application of some strategies to *make the message memorable* through suggestive *images*⁸, and the *deliberate selection of the target group*. The amateur review also contains certain characteristics of the promotional review. The *effectiveness* of the appeal, so important for an advertisement, is confirmed by the comments below both videos.

Further deviations from the canon can be observed as a result of transferring the review to a new medium, i.e. the Internet. The classic review pattern is thus extended by adjusting it to the new forms of communication, making use of the multimedia (sound, moving or static images, and moving or static onscreen text). The video review resembles a hypertext, in that it supersedes a linear structure with a multilinear polysemous one, offering the receiver an unlimited opportunity to browse the website, repeat selected

⁸ Advertisement-like vivid imagery can be seen in both: in the expert review (suggestive parables and images) and in the amateur one (suggestive, puzzling, or graphic scenes from the film).

fragments of the audio-visual message, or participate in the panel discussions conducted in the comments section available below the videos. Consequently, the *video review* cannot be considered merely as an **adaptation** of the *review* genre to the new medium. We firmly believe that this phenomenon reflects the **extension** of the pattern, in line with Lenk's (2015) model.

The analysis of the video reviews can also show how much they depart from the canon and determine whether the change of the medium and the loosening of the genre constraints reflect the processes of **genre democratization**, leading to **modifications** within the genre pattern. This can be argued by pointing to their gradual deviation from the constraints of a specialist text and transformation into the forms accessible to a wide audience. Despite the differences resulting from different reviewers' positions as message senders (the expert having an undeniable advantage over the amateurs), the characteristic feature of both video reviews is the weakening of the reviewers' position of authority. The film reviewed is shown in such a way as to reflect, to some extent, the audience's perspective and tastes.

On the whole, our research shows that while the video review preserves the constitutive features of the *review* genre, there are essential modifications occurring within the genre itself. This representative case study clearly proves that due to its adaptation to a new medium, i.e. the Internet, and its consequent accessibility to a wide audience, the video review has considerably extended its genre pattern by endowing it with the traits typical of audio-visual forms, and has undergone a kind of democratisation, adjusting itself to the new viewers' requirements on all the levels subject to analysis.

To conclude, let us emphasise that our attempt to classify the complex issues concerning the *review* genre on the example of selected online video reviews does not aspire to constitute either complete or comprehensive research into the transformations of the entire genre pattern. However, we firmly believe that this study helps to grasp the dynamic character of the genre and discern the tendencies in its modifications. Moreover, the transformations recorded within the genre pattern induce us to grant the video review the **status of an independent text type**, due to the following factors that constitute it: the media environment (i.e. the material medium), distinct senders, structural features, the choice of language actions and the manner of their implementation, as well as the subject matter of individual reviews.

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