Introduction

According to Paltridge (1997: 1)[1] the notion of genre has through the years received attention in many and varied lines of research ranging from folklore studies and linguistic anthropology to rhetoric, discourse analysis and of a more recent date applied linguistics. It is to this area of applied linguistics that this thematic volume "Analysing Business Genres" is dedicated.

Practical genre knowledge is essential to everyday life and is more often than not possessed without particular awareness. Within the area of LSP many very specialised genres exist which are frequently only known to persons belonging to a very particular discourse community. To the people who form part of the communication process of these genres, but who are not necessarily engineers, lawyers, economists, etc., knowledge of these genres at macro as well as micro levels is vital. So text writers, translators, teachers and linguists alike should be able to benefit from the following seven articles discussing theoretical aspects of genre theory as well as providing detailed analyses of specific LSP genres.

The first article "Communicative Purpose as Genre Determinant" is by Inger Askehave and discusses the functional approach to genre analysis and addresses the problem of categorising genres on the basis of functional criteria. It questions the use of "communicative purpose" as the primary determinant of genre-membership arguing that "The absence of a clear consensus as to what communicative purpose is and… the fact that sets of purposes may be associated with a text makes it very difficult to use the concept as a tool for categorising texts and for analysing texts in general" (p.19)

The second article "Popular vs. Professional Aspects of Economics Texts in English is by Magnar Brekke and asks whether prior genre knowledge is a "must" for LSP comprehension or "… whether the observable text-linguistic, pragmatic and semiotic features of a given text

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1   Paltridge, B: "Genre, frames and writting in research settings", John Benjamins, 1997.

provide sufficient basis for readers to work out the message and indeed the genre for themselves." (p.26) This question is tested empirically and the results are discussed in the article.

In article three "Die Vertextung von Termini als Ausweis textueller Strategien in technischen Textsorten" Peter Kastberg criticises the generally accepted criteria for a successful LSP text. These criteria focus on the factual content of the text and do not properly consider possible communicative or text-linguistic strategies – and thus the readability of the text. On the basis of examples Peter Kastberg shows how the strategic considerations of the author in relation to the receiver are reflected in the author's textualisation of terms depending on the genre in question.

As the title suggests, the fourth article "The Dogmas of Technical Translation – Are They Still Valid?" by Karen Korning Zethsen discusses and questions the traditional view of technical texts and consequently technical translation.Technical texts are typically considered to be standardised, objective texts with purely informative purposes. Other communicative purposes are almost considered non-existent. The article suggests that most texts are multi-functional and that the communicative purposes are often revealed through the expressivity of the text. Crucial to the problems of the article is the fact that "technical texts" are often misleadingly considered to be one genre.

Article five "Translation and Communication: A Case Study of Culture and Communication in Danish and English Sales Brochures" by Birgitte Norlyk questions the ethnocentric approach to cross-cultural communication. An approach which, for example, makes companies use standardised sales material for all markets, expecting the message to produce the same effect on all receivers, irrespective of cultural contexts. The article includes a case study which compares the English language version of a standardised sales brochure to a culturally adapted brochure made especially for the British market.

Article six "The Emergence of a New Genre: Advertising on the Internet (netvertising)" by Inmaculada Fortanet, Juan Carlos Palmer & Santiago Posteguillo sets out by discussing how the Internet influences various genres and how it creates its own. In a case study the authors examine the recently emerged, but still not fully developed, genre of "netvertising".

In the final article "Non-verbale Kommunikation von Experten" Hartwig Kalverkämper discusses body language in business negotiations from antique rhetorics till today. Kalverkämper demonstrates body language patterns in various genres and shows the importance of successful non-verbal communication.