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Investigating Annual Reports by Means of Critical Genre Analysis

Diplomová práce

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V Olomouci dne 21.8.2018   …………………………………

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ABSTRACT

The present diploma thesis deals with investigating a corporate annual report genre through the lens of Critical Genre Analysis which was newly proposed by linguist Vijay K. Bhatia in 2017. Critical Genre Analysis broadens the basic framework of genre analysis by giving more emphasis on intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and socio-pragmatic context. Apart from providing a thorough description, it aims to explain and clarify discourse and professional practices. Mainly focused on the subgenre of letter to shareholders, the corpus of the thesis presents two contrasting groups of companies – those that had a successful year and those that suffered a bankruptcy. Executing Critical Genre Analysis, the thesis seeks to uncover how the authors of selected annual reports exploit the genre's flexibility to incorporate, or, conversely, avoid including such aspects that either help or undermine achieving their professional practice objectives.

KEY WORDS

Letter to shareholders, annual report, genre analysis, Critical Genre Analysis.

ANOTACE

Tato magisterská práce se zabývá zkoumáním výročních zpráv pomocí kritické žánrové analýzy, kterou v roce 2017 nově navrhl lingvista Vijay K. Bhatia. Kritická žánrová analýza rozšiřuje základní rámec žánrové analýzy a dává větší důraz na intertextualitu, interdiskurzivitu a socio-pragmatický kontext, čímž kromě obsáhlé charakteristiky žánrů vysvětluje a objasňuje použitý diskurz a odbornou praxi. Práce je především zaměřená na *dopis akcionářům*. Korpus je rozdělen na dvě kontrastní poloviny – dopisy společností, které měly úspěšný rok a dopisy společností, které zažily bankrot. Práce se tedy snaží odhalit, jakým způsobem autoři vybraných dopisů zneužívají flexibilitu tohoto žánru ve svůj prospěch.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Dopis akcionářům, výroční zpráva, žánrová analýza, kritická žánrová analýza.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CGA   Critical Genre Analysis

AR(s)   Annual report(s)

AM   Arithmetic mean

PL   Corpus of positive letters

NL   Corpus of negative letters

Nx   Negative letter number x

Px   Positive letter number x

Letter(s)   Letter(s) to shareholders

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1 Outline of the diploma thesis

1.1 Introduction

For its long existence and tradition, the genre of *annual reports* has earned a static position in the colony of business reporting genres. Corporate annual reports, company annual reports, or shortly annual reports are extensive yearly published financial statements about a company's performance in the previous year. Annual reports are typically issued by publicly held companies. Publicly held companies are owned by general public and the company's shares are traded to public on a stock exchange. The share owners are then called shareholders or stockholders. Basically, the information published in annual reports is primarily directed at shareholders with the aim to persuade them to invest or keep investing into the company.

Annual reports have typical structure with characteristically sequenced subchapters and contain predictable information. The majority of subchapters are demanding on their readers in terms of their financial education. In other words, the information is predominantly suitable for financial and business experts who are familiar with accounting and financial specialist terminology.

Professionals from many fields have drawn much attention to the very genre which has been, subsequently, researched from various perspectives – annual reports are studied by business experts, financial and accounting professionals, management specialists and many more. However, Vijay K. Bhatia, a professor in linguistics mainly concerned with genre theories and applied linguistics, remarks that 'an equally interesting investigation […] could focus on corporate communication, especially on the use of linguistic resources that often makes it possible for corporate writers to persuade and convince a range of diverse audiences of stakeholders' (*Critical* 87). Bhatia calls attention to the linguistic potential of annual reports.

In his recently published book *Critical Genre Analysis: Investigating interdiscursive performance in professional practice*, he devotes one chapter of the book to researching corporate annual reports. He presents a new approach towards genre analysis which focuses on accounting for and explaining why professional writers write the way they do (*Critical* 27). One of his researches concentrates on accounting for discursive strategies applied by writers of annual reports. This diploma thesis centres

around Bhatia's newly proposed theory of Critical Genre Analysis. Instead of focusing on the whole genre of corporate annual reports, however, this thesis concentrates on solely one of its parts, namely a *letter to shareholders*.

Letters to shareholders are a sub-genre of annual reports dissimilar to its remaining subgenres. A letter to shareholders, a president's letter, a letter from Chairman of the Board, a letter from Chief Executive Officer, a Chairman's or President's statement, a message from the Chairman, or Chair's message, all present an essential part of annual reports. Letters to shareholders are less demanding on reader's specialist knowledge. As such, letters to shareholders are very often overlooked by professionals, since the crucial financial information is contained mainly in the sections following letters to shareholders.

Throughout the history of annual reports, letters to shareholders have gained a reputation of an insignificant sub-genre. However, an increased number of companies that publish annual reports, has led to an increased interest in this subgenre as well. Noteworthy approaches towards studying letters to shareholders have presented researches that searched for explanations for linguistic strategies applied in letters to shareholders and have attempted to link the strategic linguistic choices to the company's operation success or failure.

One of the major bankruptcy events in the United States business history has drawn attention to this overlooked part of corporate annual reports. A successful American energy company, Enron Corporation, filed for bankruptcy in 2001 which at that time came as a surprise to the whole world. Enron's annual report was under a great inspection of experts and, finally, the case of Enron attracted Bhatia's research as well. In *Critical Genre Analysis* (2017), Bhatia contrasts Enron's highly positive letter to shareholders, that did not give any detectable indications of its deteriorating operation, to the company's filing for bankruptcy the same year.

Inspired by Bhatia's attraction towards genre analysis of letters to shareholders, the present thesis selects the sub-genre of letters to shareholders as its principal focus of research and works primarily with Bhatia's newly proposed Critical Genre Analysis as its source guide. Specifically, genre analysis applied to letters to shareholders focuses on detecting the differences between linguistic choices shown in letters to shareholders of companies that had a successful year contrasted to letters of companies which suffered an unsuccessful year, eventually leading them to bankruptcy.

1.2   Corpus of data

In terms of selecting suitable letters to shareholders (hereinafter shortly referred to as *letters*) for the corpus of this thesis, it was necessary to decide on criteria that would designate the companies as being highly successful or unsuccessful in the year of the letters' issuance.

Successful companies were easier to determine. There exist many business magazines and newspapers which publish lists of the most successful companies every year. For the purposes of the corpus, I decided to focus on United States-based companies only, and the most suitable list proved to be a list called Fortune 500 that yearly releases top-publicly listed companies in the United States.

The difficulty with choosing the letters for unsuccessful companies was that there does not exist a unified list of the most unsuccessful companies. Therefore, the letters of companies with negative performance were selected according to various lists carried out by different web magazines concerned with the business world.

Detailed information about the selection of suitable letters that would represent either successful or unsuccessful companies is illustrated in chapter *3.2 Selected companies*.

1.3   Hypotheses of the present study

The main goal of the thesis was briefly outlined in the introduction of this chapter. Broadly speaking, the primary focus of the thesis aims at uncovering differences between two groups of letters to shareholders, that is letters written by successful and unsuccessful companies. More precisely, the thesis aims to investigate whether their authors choose linguistic strategies according to the company's operation results. The hypotheses are as follows.

Hypothesis 1

Based on her study of linguistic structures in letters that cover a specific company's turn from prosperity to severe losses, Jane Thomas (1977) argues that 'as the news become more negative, linguistic structures suggest a factual, "objective" situation caused by circumstances not attributable to any persons who might otherwise be thought responsible' (Thomas 47). In terms of methodology, her research is based on systemic theory developed by Halliday (Thomas 47). This thesis employs some steps

from Thomas's analysis. The first part of the practical analysis, namely chapter *3.3.2 Lexis and Grammar*, concentrates on Thomas's argument that objectivity of letters coincides with decrease in profitability. Hypothesis 1 then proposes that her argument will also be applicable on letters issued by diverse companies.

Hypothesis 2

One of the communicative purposes that motivate authors to compose letters with professional care is the deliberate intention to persuade the readers. Persuasion is achieved through strategic linguistic and extra-linguistic choices. The thesis looks at the use of rhetorical move-structures (Bhatia 2017) *ethos, pathos*, *logos* (Bax 2011) and also conceptual metaphors (Kövecses 2010) as strategic practices employed by authors who aim at the reader's persuasion, that is the linguistic choices employed to win over the reader's, shareholder's, or just anyone's trust in the company. My second Hypothesis 2 is that persuasion, while not being a primary goal of letters, is an essential component of letters to shareholders.

Hypothesis 3

While letters to shareholders belong to the reporting colony of genres, they share a lot of features with the promotional colony as well and, therefore, letters are said to be a mixed genre (*Worlds* 100). Hypothesis 3 proposes that letters to shareholders equally employ linguistic and extra-linguistic features of both promotional and reporting genres.

Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 outline the focal points of the present diploma thesis and will be addressed throughout the following chapters. Chapter *2 Theoretical background and framework* gives the theoretical base of the thesis. The following chapter *3 Practical part* applies different strategies to analyse the corpus, and chapter *4 Conclusion* evaluates the results of the practical analysis.

2 Theoretical background and framework

This chapter serves as a theoretical basis for the following chapter, i.e. the practical part. In particular, it focuses on the clarification of crucial concepts necessary for its analytical application. First, the subchapter *2.1 Defining genre* presents diverse definitions of the notion *genre* employed by various linguists concerned with genre theory. From definitions offered by them, a summary definition of the term *genre* is carried out. The next section of this chapter is devoted to illustrating an annual report genre – its history, legislation, definition, classification, formal properties, and reasons for linguistic attractiveness of this genre. It is followed by a section presenting genre analysis, and the whole chapter is concluded with introducing Bhatia's new theoretical concept of Critical Genre Analysis (hereinafter referred to as CGA).

2.1 Defining genre

A widely-spread term *genre* is an interdisciplinary notion used on a daily basis across various disciplines. The term is applied in literature studies to categorize different literature forms in terms of its structural and stylistic features (such as e.g. an essay, novel, or short story). Other disciplines also employ the term to classify its outputs, for instance film theories, music, or graphic arts, to name a few. Finally and most importantly, the term has found its way into linguistics when, following categorization patterns from other areas, 'genre has also been applied to categories of non-literary written texts, sometimes for the purpose of characterizing the features of such texts for the teaching of writing' (Bruce 6). This thesis focuses on the linguistic application of the term which categorizes texts according to their content, linguistic devices, structuring, and purpose. More specifically, this work concentrates on genres used in business professional practice. The following passage presents definitions of the term *genre* proposed by linguists interested in genre theory, out of which a comprehensive summary is carried out.

In 1984, Carolyn R. Miller proposed a new perspective upon genre studies which was termed *genre as social action* and 'researchers in the North American and New Rhetoric traditions of genre generally cite Miller (1984) as the crystallisation point that brought notions of genre and social action together' (Bateman 188). Following this new perspective, Jim Martin developed genre theory within systemic functional linguistics (the Sydney school of genre analysis), defining genres as 'staged, goal oriented social

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processes. Staged, because it usually takes us more than one step to reach our goals; goal oriented because we feel frustrated if we don't accomplish the final steps […]; social because writers shape their texts for readers of particular kinds' (Martin 6). Norman Fairclough agrees with the genre-as-social-action view claiming that 'when we analyse a text or interaction in terms of genre, we are asking how it figures within and contributes to social action and interaction in social events' (Fairclough 66). These three linguists support the view that a crucial property of a genre is its engagement in society.

A ground-breaking theory was introduced by John M. Swales who defined a *rhetorical moves analysis* as being central to genres. *Rhetorical moves analysis* focuses on global organizational patterns found in genres. Swales' definition of genre highlights the presence of these patterns:

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience.
>
> (Swales 58)

Swales is the main representative of the linguistic tradition English for Specific Purposes. Together with Vijay K. Bhatia, they perceive genre as a useful means of teaching language to second language speakers. Bhatia complements Swales's definition with one more important quality of genres saying that 'although genres are typically associated with recurring rhetorical contexts and are identified on the basis of a shared set of communicative purposes with constraints on allowable contributions in the use of lexico-grammatical and discoursal forms, they are not static' (Bhatia 27). Thus, genres develop within the scope of recurring framework, but this framework is not closed and can develop or change.

The five definitions above present opinions of the most prominent linguists interested in genre analysis. These definitions agree in these points:

- genres have one or more communicative purposes (goals) that influence features of the genre;

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- genres are subordinated to social and contextual factors;
- genres have typical organisational structure (rhetorical moves);
- genres are dynamic;
- to some extent, genres share similar generic structure, content, style and intended audience.

Even though the three traditions have distinct attitudes towards treating genres, the points above give summary of genre characteristics broadly agreed upon. The following subchapter discusses corporate annual report genre, which is the focus of this thesis and addresses the above-mentioned genre aspects.

2.2   Corporate annual reports

In order to provide a complete genre analysis of any kind, it is vital to investigate some background information concerning the respective genre prior to analysing its specific examples. By background information we understand a broad scale of contextual features which play important roles in the creation of specific genres. These include such aspects as historical development (from the first corporate annual report issued more than a whole century ago to the typical annual report of today), its classification, process of production, formal properties of the annual report as its general structure, length, or issuing.

2.2.1   Historical background and legislation

Historically, the practice of annual report issuance is dating back to the first half of the past century, but the practice was very scarce then and 'in the 19th century, the annual report was usually [only] a letter to stockholders followed by a financial statement' ("U.S. Business History"). Gradually, these reports have been adding more information as CEO's statement, future plans for new products, or market data.

The information found in these historical annual reports was not certified or controlled by auditors or institutions. David Wessel, a contributor to the Wall Street Journal, explains: 'The practice of audited corporate financial statements is a modern one. U.S. Steel Corp. was a lonely pioneer in 1903 when it hired Price, Waterhouse & Co., as it was known then, to certify the accuracy of what's considered the first modern corporate annual report, 40 pages of narrative, numbers and photos. Other companies were slow to follow' ("When Standards Are Unacceptable"). Another twenty-six years had passed before 'legislation was enacted after the stock market crash in 1929 [when]

the annual report became a regular component of corporate financial reporting'
("Annual reports"). Finally, five years later, Securities and Exchange Commission
(SEC) was established and since then, SEC has become the leading agency to regulate
the obligatory submission and content of annual reports.

The agency SEC presented a new format of annual reports in 1934 which is called
a *Form 10-K* (10-K). This form is required to be submitted annually (after the end
of the company's fiscal year) to the SEC and it typically contains very detailed financial
information owing to the regulations on accuracy and content issued by the SEC.
Another organization overseeing the financial and accounting reporting is the Financial
Accounting Standards Board (FASB) which created current standards of financial
reporting. These standards, in other words *generally accepted accounting principles
(GAAP),* must be followed to 'provide for consistency in financial reporting and
comparability of financial information across firms' (Stanko and Zeller 5). Thus,
the SEC and FASB (with other minor organizations) control the form of financial and
accounting reporting in the US.

The above comment on the official regulatory restrictions on annual reports is
relevant to the study of the genre because the restrictions validate the information found
in annual reports. More precisely, the restrictions applied solely on specific parts
of annual reports lend its credibility to other parts of annual reports which are not
subject to approval of the above-mentioned regulatory institutions. Therefore, a reader
can be influenced by the fact that the information found in annual reports should be true
and, subsequently, writers of annual reports can exploit the supposed credibility to their
own benefit by influencing the reader's opinion.

As already indicated, we can find two basic types of annual reports: the form
10-K required by the SEC to be submitted yearly, and the corporate annual report which
is not obligatory but presents a great opportunity for the companies to disclose financial
information under less strict conditions. Even though corporate annual reports are
subject to regulatory requirements of the aforementioned institutions as well, Stanko
and Zeller comment that 'some of the material in an annual report is required disclosure,
while other material is included solely to improve the value of the company's
information or simply to promote the company, similar to other marketing tools' (4).
Companies decide to publish their corporate annual report voluntarily and usually
with the aim to present the information to their existing or potential investors,
shareholders, stakeholders, and anyone interested. Compared to its opponent, the form

10-K, companies make the corporate annual report more user-friendly, readable, and, consequently, more flexible to the author's intentions.

Therefore, from a linguistic point of view, the language of annual reports is more influenced by private intentions of the authors and, consequently, it seems highly interesting to scrutinize the linguistic devices utilized in the genre. A linguistic analysis would help demystify how language can be exploited and genres bended by its users that intend to imprint their own intentions into the text. This thesis focuses on the corporate annual report over the 10-K form due to its propensity to be exploited by its authors, especially in situations when the company experiences unfortunate events, such as profit losses or price per share drops. Corporate annual reports combine legislatively required information with optional information chosen by the company. Annual reports are 'the "public face" of corporations; they reflect what a company at a specific point in time wanted the general public to know about them,' ("U.S. Business History"). For those reasons, the genre presents an interesting topic for a linguistic analysis. The so-called *public face* is mostly tangible in letters. Therefore, I decided letters to become the central field of research of the present diploma thesis. While letters typically appear at the beginning of the corporate annual reports, interestingly enough, a very popular practice is to take the letter to shareholders and add it to the 10-K form creating a new format of annual reports. The corpus of letters to shareholders analysed in this thesis consists of both, letters as a part of corporate annual reports and letters combined with the 10-K form.

2.2.2 Defining and classifying the corporate annual report

The corporate annual report, in other words an annual report for shareholders or sometimes simply addressed as an annual report, is one of the crucial outcomes of company disclosure practices. The document presents a comprehensive information about company's performance in its previous year. Doctor John Stittle, from the University of Essex, views annual reports as 'a key way of projecting a self-image – a way of portraying the corporate personality and, most importantly, a way of delivering both implicit and explicit messages' (preface). As a large part of the text, the corporate annual report exposes statutorily required information accompanied by infiltered positive underlying. Despite the regulations, the authors are able to deliver their own private or corporate intentions into the text employing masterful language use.

As one of the genre names suggests, annual reports are primarily directed at its current or potential shareholders. Nevertheless, besides shareholders, targeted recipients of annual reports are also other investors, stakeholders, employees, the business world as such, and the general public. To attract and persuade the readers, the annual report is no longer a plainly written black and white text. The authors take advantage of a 'far more effective way than […] mere plain written statements. They can [convey the information] by various means such as the report's style, use of photographs, page layout and design, use of colour, quality of paper and printing type and so on' (Stittle preface). It is the reader's task to see through this shiny facade.

After analysing the annual report, an experienced reader can gain useful information concerning the company's financial health, such as debts and the company's ability to pay the debts off, its profit or loss, financial growth, past to future sustainability and its future direction. Nevertheless, the reader is expected to possess a certain amount of experience or knowledge of similar texts in order to extract the crucial information, or implications spread out in the text in order to arrive at the right conclusions when evaluating the company's condition. As Bhatia comments: 'In order to get the real picture, the stakeholders often need to go beyond the rhetoric and interpret the results carefully' (*Worlds* 18). Though annual reports are aimed at very wide range of readers, only the experienced ones can be apt to absorb the relevant information.

In terms of the classification of annual reports, according to Bhatia, they belong to a genre colony called *reporting genres*. By the genre colony, he means 'a grouping of closely related genres, which to a large extent share their individual communicative purposes' (*Worlds* 94, 66). While the primary communicative purpose of the corporate annual report is to inform, Bhatia also stresses the dynamic nature of the genre and its propensity to colonization by promotional genres (*Worlds* 94). Annual reports are an example of a reporting genre, its lexico-grammatical, rhetorical and other resources also employ linguistic means of promotional genres, and, consequently, the genre can be placed into both colonies, creating a mixed genre (*Worlds* 100). Figure 2.1 shows the annual report in relation to other genres from the reporting colony and its relationship to promotional genres.
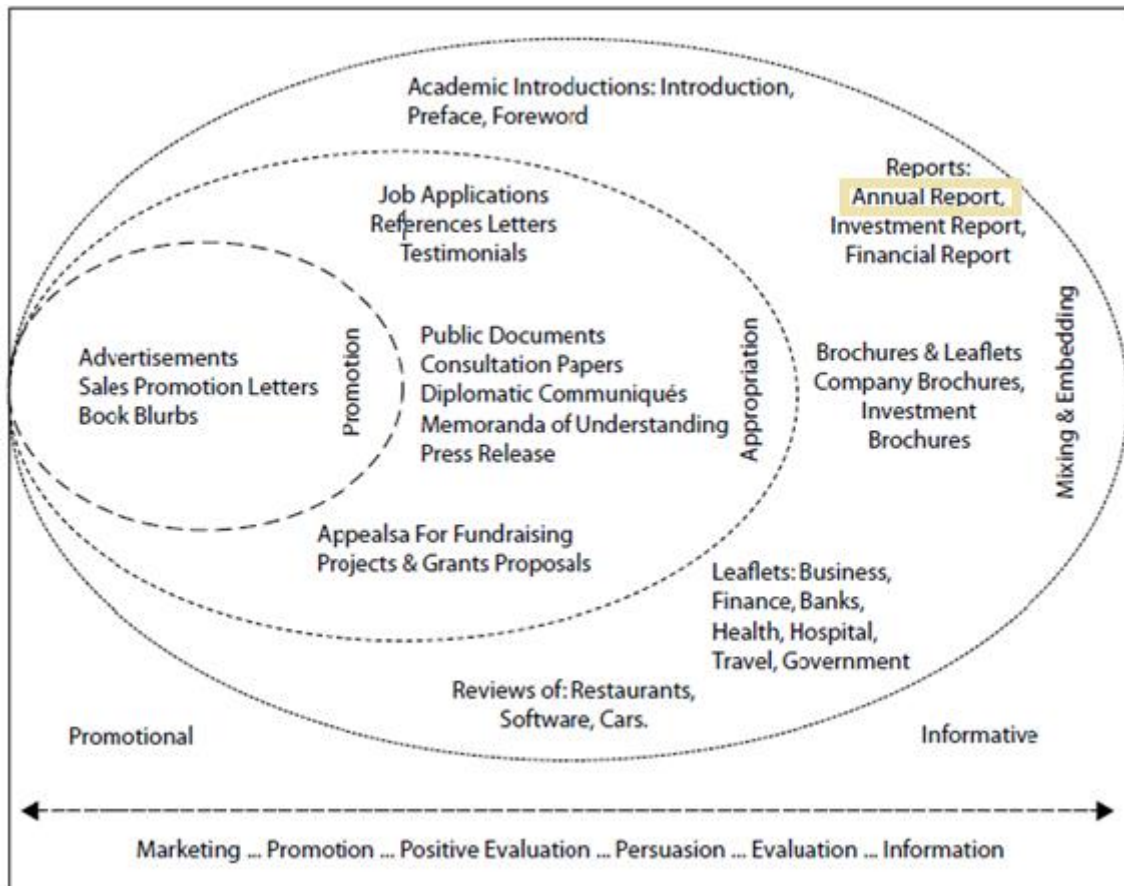
Figure 2.1: Colonization of academic, professional and other institutionalized genres (*Worlds* 102)

2.2.3   Process of production

Since annual reports consist of several distinct sections, they are not composed by a single person. A typical annual report represents a collaboration of company's different departments and, in case of the accounting information section, also expert externs.

The financial department is responsible for all the accounting information published in the annual report. Moreover, its truthfulness and reliability are guaranteed by extern auditors who certificate the information. This section usually starts with Independent Auditors' Report (see Figure 2.2) and continues with Consolidated Financial Statements (Figure 2.3) loaded with tables and displays full of numbers, statistical information, and financial statements. This becomes the base for further analysis and reinterpretation by the financial department. Nevertheless, the following sections are no longer certified by auditors, in other words, the readers should not take the information for granted.

To the shareholders of Bank of China Limited
(Incorporated in the People's Republic of China with limited liability)

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of Bank of China Limited (the "Bank") and its subsidiaries set out on pages 136 to 297, which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 December 2015, the consolidated income statement, the consolidated statement of comprehensive income, the consolidated statement of changes in equity and the consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Figure 2.2: First paragraph of auditor's statement (Bank of China 132)

Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 31 December 2015 (Amount in millions of Renminbi, unless otherwise stated)

	Note	Year ended 31 December	
		2015	2014
Profit for the year		179,417	177,198
Other comprehensive income:	V.11		
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss			
— Actuarial losses on defined benefit plans		(161)	(233)
— Other		14	5
Subtotal		(147)	(228)
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss			
— Net fair value gains on available for sale financial assets		6,573	8,430
— Share of other comprehensive income of associates and joint ventures accounted for using the equity method		(361)	256
— Exchange differences from the translation of foreign operations		6,896	(2,759)
— Other		336	471
Subtotal		13,444	6,398
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		13,297	6,170
Total comprehensive income for the year		192,714	183,368
Total comprehensive income attributable to:			
Equity holders of the Bank		182,171	175,165
Non-controlling interests		10,543	8,203
		192,714	183,368

Figure 2.3: Example of typical content of accounting information (Bank of China 137)

Another extensive section, basically the longest one, is the management's discussion of the accounting information (MD&A). This financial review originates in the financial department, but, since this section is not certified, the analysts have the possibility to pick only the convenient results that comply with their intention to show the company in its brightest light. Management's discussion, based on

the tables and figures from the accounting information, becomes more apprehensible and readable for less educated and less experienced readers (see Figure 2.4). Nevertheless, the readers must be careful and bear in mind that the information is already heavily selected and discussed with the public relations department who are the experts when it comes to the language use.

Growth

We measure our growth primarily by the amount of the period-over-period growth in our net sales and our comparable store and club sales. We also review the progress of our digital retail investments by measuring the impact e-commerce sales have on our comparable store and club sales. At times, we make strategic investments which are focused on the long-term growth of the Company. These strategic investments may not benefit net sales and comparable store and club sales in the near term.

Net Sales

(Amounts in millions)	Fiscal Years Ended January 31,							
	2016			2015			2014	
	Net Sales	Percent of Total	Percent Change	Net Sales	Percent of Total	Percent Change	Net Sales	Percent of Total
Walmart U.S.	$298,378	62.3%	3.6%	$288,049	59.8%	3.1%	$279,406	59.0%
Walmart International	123,408	25.8%	(9.4)%	136,160	28.2%	(0.3)%	136,513	28.9%
Sam's Club	56,828	11.9%	(2.1)%	58,020	12.0%	1.5%	57,157	12.1%
Net sales	$478,614	100.0%	(0.7)%	$482,229	100.0%	1.9%	$473,076	100.0%

Our consolidated net sales decreased $3.6 billion or 0.7% for fiscal 2016 and increased $9.2 billion or 1.9% for fiscal 2015, when compared to the previous fiscal year. Net sales for fiscal 2016 were negatively impacted by $17.1 billion or 3.5% as a result of fluctuations in currency exchange rates and a $1.9 billion decrease in fuel sales primarily due to the lower selling prices of fuel at our Sam's Club segment. The negative effect of such factors was offset by 1.3% year-over-year growth in retail square feet, positive comparable sales in the Walmart U.S. segment and higher e-commerce sales across the Company. The increase in net sales for fiscal 2015 was primarily due to 3.0% year-over-year growth in retail square feet, positive comparable sales in the U.S. and higher e-commerce sales across the Company. The increase was partially offset by $5.3 billion of negative impact from fluctuations in currency exchange rates for fiscal 2015.

Figure 2.4: Example of the management's discussion (Wal-Mart 20)

Public relations department takes responsibility for the *chairman's letter to shareholders* which is the main focus of this thesis. The letter further alters the information found in other parts of the annual report and, moreover, it inclines to incorporate forward-looking statements in relation to company's future prospects. Bhatia comments that the departure from describing a fact (i.e. from the other parts of the annual report) to giving space to the company's outlooks 'depends on how well the company has performed in the preceding year. If the company has performed financially well, we are more likely to find an elaborate account of the achievements, but if the company has gone through a lean period, then it is less likely to include a lengthy mention of past events' (*Critical* 96). This strategy of focusing on a promising future comes from the public relations department. Obviously, as the name of the letter hints, the letter is composed by the company's chairman (or the chief executive officer), nevertheless, we are dealing with a collaborative cooperation of professional public relation experts and writers. The letter to shareholders usually does not contain any tables or figures but presents a text in a form of a letter (see Figure 2.5).

"Every year, for millions of people, we take an ordinary day and make it extraordinary."

In 2010, we climbed a mountain—and the view from the top is exhilarating. Following our midyear debt restructuring and emergence from Chapter 11 as a NYSE public company, we formed a new leadership team and set forth to execute a new strategy focused on building the best regional theme park company in the world. We took steps to exit activities that did not fit into our core strategy and to reduce costs, including the relocation of our corporate office. Our improving financial metrics in the second half of the year, along with the appreciation in our stock price, indicate that we are clearly on the right path.

To help fuel our success, we re-engaged our employees who are, by far, our greatest asset.
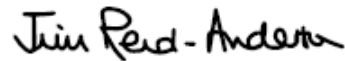
By clearly articulating our goals and instilling a culture of open and honest communication, we have unleashed the passion in our people, aligning their energy behind our strategic direction and alongside all our stakeholders, including our guests.

Each and every year, for millions of people, we take an ordinary day and make it extraordinary by creating lifetime memories they can only experience at Six Flags. The results of our work were reflected in satisfaction ratings that reached new heights in 2010, as we strived to consistently deliver a friendly, safe and fun experience for each and every park guest.

As we enter our 2011 season, we are well positioned to take the company to new heights. We are introducing the most exciting lineup of new rides and attractions in a decade and implementing refocused pricing and marketing strategies that should enhance guests' experiences and also draw incremental guests into our parks. With growing momentum, we are well positioned to continue building the value of Six Flags for our guests, employees and shareholders in 2011 and beyond.

I would like to thank all of our stakeholders for your ongoing support of Six Flags. Our top priority and steadfast commitment is aimed at enhancing Six Flags' value to you.

Jim Reid-Anderson

Jim Reid-Anderson
Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer,
Six Flags Entertainment
Corporation

2

Figure 2.5: Letter to shareholders (Six Flags 2)

Not a less important, but an often overlooked, part of annual reports is a disclaimer which accompanies most of contemporary annual reports. This legal statement is a work of legal departments and it distances the text of the annual report from responsibility for its content, particularly, the speculative statements like predictions of future, forward-looking statements, and stated ambitions. As such,

disclaimers aim especially at the *letter to shareholders*, (see Figure 2.6). The disclaimer allows the authors of the annual report to avoid responsibility for their statements, in case that the text does not coincide with the reality or the future.

Cautionary Statement with Respect to Forward-Looking Statements

This report contains forward-looking statements that reflect Toyota's plans and expectations. These forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause Toyota's actual results, performance, achievements or financial position to be materially different from any future results, performance, achievements or financial position expressed or implied by these forward-looking statements. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in economic conditions, market demand, and the competitive environment affecting, the automotive markets in Japan, North America, Europe, Asia and other markets in which Toyota operates;
- Fluctuations in currency exchange rates, particularly with respect to the value of the Japanese yen, the U.S. dollar, the euro, the Australian dollar, the Russian ruble, the Canadian dollar and the British pound, and interest rates fluctuations;
- Changes in funding environment in financial markets and increased competition in the financial services industry;

- Toyota's ability to market and distribute effectively;
- Toyota's ability to realize production efficiencies and to implement capital expenditures at the levels and times planned by management;
- Changes in the laws, regulations and government policies in the markets in which Toyota operates that affect Toyota's automotive operations, particularly laws, regulations and government policies relating to vehicle safety including remedial measures such as recalls, trade, environmental protection, vehicle emissions and vehicle fuel economy, as well as changes in laws, regulations and government policies that affect Toyota's other operations, including the outcome of current and future litigation and other legal proceedings, government proceedings and investigations;
- Political and economic instability in the markets in which Toyota operates;
- Toyota's ability to timely develop and achieve market acceptance of new products that meet customer demand;
- Any damage to Toyota's brand image;
- Toyota's reliance on various suppliers for the provision of supplies;
- Increases in prices of raw materials;

- Toyota's reliance on various digital and information technologies;
- Fuel shortages or interruptions in electricity, transportation systems, labor strikes, work stoppages or other interruptions to, or difficulties in, the employment of labor in the major markets where Toyota purchases materials, components and supplies for the production of its products or where its products are produced, distributed or sold;
- The impact of natural calamities including the negative effect on Toyota's vehicle production and sales.

A discussion of these and other factors which may affect Toyota's actual results, performance, achievements or financial position is contained in Toyota's annual report on Form 20-F, which is on file with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission.

Web Investors (SEC Fillings)

Figure 2.6: Legal disclaimer (Toyota 60)

To sum up, at least four units that participate in the creation of a typical annual report can be found. Firstly, there are financial specialists who present the final numbers and lay down the financial discussion and analysis of the data. Secondly, certified accountants guarantee the credibility of accounting information. Public relations specialists take part in the creation of the financial analysis as well, but their major task is the letter. The last component is the legal disclaimer from the law department. When all the parties involved succeed in the creation of their section, the annual report is publicly released. Recent annual reports can be easily found on the companies' web sites. Speaking about the 10-K forms, they can be found and downloaded from the EDGAR online database administered by the SEC.

Finally, annual reports are issued once a year after the end of the company's fiscal year. There exist also other disclosure documents that have to be released more frequently, such as quarterly reports. The annual report, however, is the key document when searching for a thorough summary of company's operation.

2.2.4   Formal properties and its structure

At first glance, a contemporary annual report to shareholders looks like a colourful magazine containing an unlimited number of eye-catching photographs, strong motivational slogans, statements, and highlighted headlines. All in all, annual reports strive to present the company as a positively tuned and strong, profitable organism aware and sure of every business step it takes. Diverted from releasing nothing but

accounting information accompanied by concise comments, annual reports have developed into a tool that projects the company as a personality with strong and positive qualities. Therefore, readers should not be distracted by this surface facade because it requires digging deeper to find the essential information.

In terms of its structure, annual reports are made reader-friendly thanks to their consistency. Annual reports tend to be divided into similar chapters which usually follow each other in the same order and they address the same subject matters. The analogy of annual reports adds value to the importance of the genre, because 'consistency in the reporting structure allows a seasoned or novice investor to easily locate information when moving from one report to the next. Understanding where to look improves the usefulness and value of the information' (Stanko and Zeller 12). Other reasons for its likeness are the GAAP requirements and other legislations that must be followed, and which limit the content of disclosure documents,.

Though the structure of annual reports stays relatively the same, its length varies to a great degree. As mentioned in chapter *2.2.1*, the company U.S. Steel Corp. released a forty pages long issue in 1903. Since then, the length of annual reports has gradually increased up to two hundred pages. In 2000, Enron Corporation released a fifty-eight pages long report; eleven years later, Ford Motor Company increased the length to one hundred and eighty-six pages which is a considerably huge difference. Comparing these two annual reports shows that only the section of Management's Discussion and Analysis has increased from Enron's eight pages to Ford's fifty-three pages. However, the length does not influence the structure and formal properties which stay more or less similar and consistent in a longer annual report or a shorter one.

Looking at the typical structure of the annual report, one of the first pages presents a section called *financial highlights*. There can be found financial data selected by the company and it usually shows positive numbers. The information can be biased however. Financial highlights are mostly followed by a letter. The annual report continues with a *management's discussion and analysis* (MD&A), a section required and regulated by the SEC. In this part, financial and business experts evaluate and comment on the numbers. Though restricted by the SEC, Stanko and Zeller comment that 'like other sections of the annual report, the MD&A section should generally follow a consistent format. If a company deviates from this format, statement users should read the information with caution, as management might be attempting to conceal

unfavorable information' (21). After MD&A, there occurs a *report of management* that highlights management's responsibility for what appears in the financial report. The next comes an *independent auditor's report* followed by *financial statements and related notes* that includes a consolidated statement of income, balance sheet, cashflow and stockholder's equity with many notes and specifications. Then, a typical annual report continues with a *five-year or ten-year summary of operating results* which is also required by the SEC, but this section is not certified by auditors. According to Stanko and Zeller (sections are summarized in Figure 2.7), an annual report concludes with *investor and company information* (stockholder information).

In addition to what was pointed out by Stanko and Zeller, a special focus should be payed to another subpart that occurs in every annual report: *a legal disclaimer*. The legal disclaimer does not have a fixed placement in the structure. It can precede, be included, or follow the MD&A, or sometimes it can be found at the very end of the annual report. The legal disclaimer can range from a single paragraph to a whole page.

Financial Highlights

Statement of Mission or Corporate Profile

Chairman's Message

Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A)

Report of Management

Report of Independent Accountants

Statement of Income

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Change in Stockholder's Equity

Statement of Cash Flow

Notes to the Financial Statements

Five- or Ten-Year Summary of Operating Results

Investor and Company Information

Figure 2.7: Annual report components based on Stanko and Zeller (13)

2.2.5   Annual report as an interesting topic of investigation

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, annual reports are not limited by number of pages. Therefore, they tend to be quite lengthy. Also, as described in the previous section, a typical annual report contains numerous sections. Some sections are relatively comparable, while others stand out and give the impression of being infiltered into the genre. Evidently, in terms of the scope and structure, writers can enjoy considerable freedom and, apart from some regulatory requirements applied to specific sections, writers can modify the structure extensively. At this point, the challenge is to detect these modifications and, mainly, uncover the writer's motives for doing so.

To detect the modifications, readers must first think about the primary objective of the annual report. In the past, the annual report's function was to simply report and inform the concerned readers about the given company's operations. Nowadays, however, the reader should be aware that 'the function of corporate disclosure documents, as in many other corporate genres, seems to have undergone a gradual shift from informing and reporting to increasingly promoting the companies to their stakeholders' (*Critical* 88). Since another function has been added to the annual report, the communicative purpose has changed as well. Gradually, the shift has affected the form and structure of the genre.

Following this gradual shift, the alternation of the established genre of annual reports has become increasingly attractive to linguists. The changes affected many parts of the genre: the graphic layout, which has become more colourful and eye-catching; the unlimited scope, that has led to an increase in pages; the modified structure, which shows the company's highlights first; or the use of linguistic and other semiotic resources. The first company that drew linguistic attention to this genre was an American energy corporation Enron (*Critical* 88). In 2001, this powerful corporation filed for bankruptcy. This happened only few months after publishing a very positive and future-promising annual report. The business world was shocked, and trustworthiness of the genre was questioned for the first time.

After this event, the interest in annual reports has increased and experts from different professional fields started to scrutinize the genre. Also inspired by the Enron scandal, in one of his studies, Vijay K. Bhatia focuses on how the promotion in the annual reports is gained by 'mystifying corporate weaknesses through a subtle

bending of socially accepted communicative norms of corporate disclosure genres'
(*Critical* 88). His study was the stimulus for the investigation carried out in this thesis.

2.3   Genre analysis

Chapter *2.1* presented a summarized definition of the term genre, claiming that
the form, content, structure, and style are subordinated to social and contextual factors,
and at the same time to its communicative purpose. Bearing this definition in mind,
chapter *2.3 Genre Analysis* accounts for the position of genre analysis in history
of linguistics, describing three crucial traditions revolving around the term, then
presents classification of genres, and enumerates steps necessary for carrying out
a successful genre analysis. The last part of this chapter is devoted to Bhatia's newly
proposed concept of Critical Genre Analysis.

2.3.1   Three traditions

Genre analysis experienced its prime during the 1980s and 1990s when many linguists
started scrutinizing the concept of genre and its potential utilization in different fields,
education mainly. Gradually, the traditional literary conception of genres 'has become
a popular framework for analyzing the form and function of nonliterary discourse, such
as the research article, as well as a tool for developing educational practices' (Hyon
693). In her influential essay "Genre in three traditions," Hyon (1996) designates three
different traditions that have evolved in this period, and that keep three different views
upon the genre analysis (694). The traditions are presented below:

- Australian systemic functional linguistics

Drawing on Halliday's functional text analysis, his followers Martin and Rose perceive
their main differentiation from the other two traditions to be 'its development within
[systemic functional linguistics] as a functional linguistic perspective on genre analysis'
(20). Their perspective revolves around genres and their function embedded in cultural
and social contexts. Thus, the linguistic features, structure and communicative purposes
are 'interpreted in relation to the cultural and social contexts in which they occur'
(Paltridge 65). In their genre analysis, they focus on three language functions *tenor*,
field and *mode*.

- New Rhetorics

Miller published an influential article in which she creates a link between genres and social actions claiming that: 'for the critic, genres can serve both as an index to cultural patters and as tools for exploring the achievements of particular speakers and writers; for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how the two participate in the actions of a community' (165). She also claims that the definition of genre 'must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish' (Miller 151). The tradition of the North American New Rhetoric linguists focuses on ethnographic analysis, giving profound descriptions of the contextual features and the actions that the texts perform.

- English for specific purposes (ESP)

According to ESP linguists, the ultimate criterion for genre analysis and classification of genres is its communicative purpose. ESP followers view a genre 'as a tool for analyzing and teaching the spoken and written language required of nonnative speakers in academic and professional settings' (Hyon 695). In their analysis, a particular attention is paid to its structural (rhetorical) moves that are employed in the text to accomplish its desired communicative purpose. Genres are perceived 'as "communicative events" that are characterized both by their "communicative purposes" and by various patterns of "structure, style, content and intended audience"' (Hyon 695). Apart from Swales, Bhatia has spent his professional career focusing on genres within professional practices dealing with business, law, marketing, or teaching non-native speakers English.

Having accounted for the three main directions within the genre theory, it is necessary to mention that this diploma thesis combines features from all the three traditions since their focus overlaps heavily and the boundaries between the traditions are not definite. The practical analysis in chapter *3* draws on each of these traditions.

2.3.2   Classification of genres

When assigning a type of genre to a text, rather than focusing on one aspect of the text only, for example lexico-grammatical features or its structure, one should consider all the aspects that contribute to the creation of the text. It should by also taken

into consideration that genres are dynamic and prone to changes. Only rarely do real texts meet all the aspects of a particular genre. Therefore, one must apply a flexible view and decide what properties of the text will be the important ones when assigning a genre category to a text.

Moreover, apart from scrutinizing the text in question, Paltridge claims that 'a key issue here is the way the use of one genre may assume or depend on the use of a number of other interrelated genres' (68). Paltridge then establishes four terms that describe relationships between genres: genre chains, genre networks, genre sets and repertoires of genres (68). These four kinds of relationship, all slightly different, match in the point that when using or describing a genre, the knowledge of 'how [related] genres interact with each other, which genres a person might choose to perform a particular task and what the typical sequence and hierarchy of these genres might be; that is, which genres might have the most value in the particular setting' must be taken into consideration (Paltridge 69). However problematic the assignment of a text to its genre category may seem, related texts and a communicative purpose should be the major criteria because 'a text may be presented in an unusual way (for that particular genre) but still have the same communicative aim as other instances of the particular genre' (Paltridge 67).

Above these classification groupings, Bhatia emphasizes that a process of colonization is crucial to classification of genres and genre theory as such (*Worlds* 65). Colonization differentiates genres based on their communicative purposes and accordingly, ascribes them to their *genre colony*. Thus, a genre colony is a super genre; a group of genres that share the same communicative purpose. The concept works on the assumption that a communicative purpose is the essential criterion for assigning genres to some hierarchy and as such, it is based on the ESP tradition. Bhatia differentiated and analysed two colonies – promotional genres and reporting genres (*Worlds* 67). Speaking about the corporate annual report, this genre has a mixed communicative purpose. On one hand, it informs and, on the other, it works as an advertisement of the company. Therefore, the genre belongs to both promotional and reporting colony at the same time.

Moreover, Bhatia emphasizes that colonization 'involves invasion of the integrity of one genre by another genre or genre convention, often leading to the creation of a hybrid form, which eventually shares some of its genre characteristics with the one that influenced it in the first place' (*Worlds* 66). It follows that while in theory genres are recognized according to more or less fixed set of features, in reality, which is

dynamic and evolving, one cannot always rely on this generally accepted information. Without genre integrity there would be no distinctions between genres, but in practice, genres are bent, embedded or mixed with other genres. This increasingly invasive phenomenon in genre theory is called *hybridization* (Fairclough 1993).

2.3.3   Hybridization: genre mixing, embedding, bending

Genre colonies not only represent groups that contain genres sharing the same communicative purpose, but also, the concept of colonization brings 'a process whereby generic resources are exploited and appropriated to create hybrid (both mixed and embedded) forms' (*Worlds* 66). Promotional genres, namely advertising, have become the most invasive genre colony, entering several professional genres, from academic, political, journalistic genres, to a genre this thesis is interested in – a corporate annual report genre.

In case of corporate annual reports, we are dealing with a genre belonging to a reporting genres colony, whose primary function is to inform, but its genre integrity is invaded by promotional features. Bhatia comments that 'it often is the case that informative functions are more likely to be colonized by promotional functions than any other' (*Worlds* 101). In his opinion, the problem with keeping the genre integrity is difficult and 'it has become even more difficult because of the explosion of information technology, the use of new media and also the overpowering influence of promotional activities in today's competitive world' (*Worlds* 100).

The strategies employed by writers who intent to incorporate features of one genre into another are numerous: 'from a relatively subtle appropriation of lexico-grammatical and discoursal resources to a much more conspicuous "hybridization" or "mixing" and "embedding" of genres which forms a very interesting aspect of the genre theory' (*Worlds* 100). Appropriation of text-internal features (lexico-grammatical resources), in other words intertextuality, opposes appropriation of text-external features or generic resources, which is called interdiscursivity, and which causes hybridisation.

Interdiscursivity as such becomes a hot topic in CGA and is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter 2.*4 Towards Critical Genre Analysis* (*Critical* 12, 36).

2.3.4   Steps in genre analysis

Bhatia establishes the following seven steps that should be undertaken when executing

a comprehensive genre analysis. Depending on the genre in question, the purpose of investigation, or the focus of the analysis, the analyst may choose which stages of Bhatia's proposed steps he or she includes or not (*Analysing* 63). Below are enumerated the steps proposed by Bhatia.

1. Placing the given genre-text in a situational context
2. Surveying existing literature
3. Refining the situational/contextual analysis
4. Selecting corpus
5. Studying the institutional context
6. Levels of linguistic analysis
   Level 1: Analysis of lexico-grammatical features
   Level 2: Analysis of text-patterning or textualization
   Level 3: Structural interpretation of the text-genre
7. Specialist information in genre analysis

(*Analysing* 63)

Also, Paltridge highlights that we can start either by addressing the context or text first: 'we may decide to start by looking at typical discourse patterns in the texts we are interested in (a text-first approach), or we may decide to start with an examination of the context of the texts we want to investigate (a context-first approach)' (77). In this sense, a genre analysis offers great flexibility and variability.

Paltridge summarizes that the first stage in analysing a genre should be to create a corpus of sample texts of the respective genre (77). Depending on the focus of the investigation, one should decide the appropriate amount of texts. In the next step the analyst investigates information known about the genre by looking at researches carried out about the topic or network of related topics. After going through related literature, one should consider the basic framework for investigation in which it is useful to start by an extensive analysis of contextual/situational features and continue with investigating linguistic features. Again, depending on the task, appropriate linguistic aspects of texts that are put into focus should be chosen.

2.3.5 Bhatia's reservations to genre analysis

In 2017, Bhatia proposed his new conception of genre analysis in his publication *Critical Genre Analysis: Investigating interdiscursive performance in professional*

practice. His motivation to introduce this new conception aroused from his conviction that existing genre analysis does not offer a comprehensive framework that would account for the reasons why genres look the way they look. According to his opinion, traditional genre studies were too much concerned with the text-internal aspects of genres, mainly focusing on its lexico-grammatical or rhetorical resources (*Critical* 21). As a response to that, Bhatia has enlarged genre theory into what he termed Critical Genre Analysis.

CGA perceives genres as products of interdiscursive performance. Interdiscursivity is defined as appropriation across professional genres, practices and cultures, as opposed to intertextuality which Bhatia defines as appropriation across texts (*Critical* 36). Interdiscursivity becomes a crucial relational concept which Bhatia considers to be at the core of the matter when it comes to genre hybridization. Hybridization is therefore created by 'individual members of professional organizations, though bound by their common goals and objectives, [who are] having enough flexibility to incorporate "private intentions" within the concepts of professionally shared values, genre conventions and professional cultures' (*Critical* 9). The following chapter discusses CGA in detail.

2.4   Towards Critical Genre Analysis

This chapter accounts for Bhatia's newly proposed conception of genre analysis which he terms Critical Genre Analysis (CGA). Broadly speaking, Bhatia summarizes CGA as analysis that 'is meant to describe, explain and account for the discursive performance of professionals in their very specific disciplinary and often interdisciplinary contexts and cultures' (*Critical* 27). In the following subchapters, this summary definition will be dismantled into detailed descriptions and explanations. Also, due to an overwhelming complexity of CGA, this chapter pinpoints objectives of CGA that coincide with the objectives of this thesis.

Before starting a detailed account of CGA, it should be made clear that CGA does not work with prototypical examples of genres, but it is concerned with 'language use in real life contexts' (*Critical* 27). CGA works with real texts written by professionals who are members of some professional culture. This signals a slight departure from traditional ESP conception of genre theory with its pedagogic approach to a more critical conception in which the CGA analyst's goal is to reveal the reasons why professionals use the language the way they do.

2.4.1 Motives for creating CGA

Bhatia has been studying the theories of genre analysis for more than twenty years now and he has become increasingly dissatisfied with the variety of frameworks typically used to analyse genres (*Critical* 6). A traditional framework of genre analysis primarily incorporates investigation of textual (lexico-grammatical) resources, structural patterns (rhetorical moves) or intertextual features of texts. While all these aspects are essential to genre analysis, Bhatia's major objection is that 'textual analysis gives us information about the use of lexico-grammatical and rhetorical resources; however, it does not tell us enough about the use and success of the text when actually exploited in real life contexts' (*Critical* 79). He argues that genre analysis should be moved towards contextualisation.

Nevertheless, he does not attempt to discredit existing textual-oriented analysis. He sees CGA as 'an attempt to extend genre theory beyond the analyses of textual, intertextual and a number of other semiotic resources used in professional genres in order to understand and clarify professional practices or actions in typical academic and professional contexts' (*Critical* 8). Basically, the analysis of textual, intertextual and semiotic resources is enhanced and complemented by an extra focus on contextualization. Genre analysis should include a study of professional practice, professional culture and the language as means of professional objectives achievement.

2.4.2 Developments from genre analysis

Bhatia lists three significant aspects that differentiate genre analysis from CGA (*Critical* 11). Firstly, 'it attempts to account for the interdiscursive aspects of professional genres by defining and developing further the notion of "interdiscursivity" in genre studies' (*Critical* 11). Interdiscursivity, an appropriation of generic resources, becomes one of the major focuses of CGA. Professional writers employ different strategies in their attempts to incorporate their private or corporate intentions in their texts. One of the strategies increases the level of generic interdiscursivity. Writers pragmatically exploit features from various genres and incorporate them into their texts with the intention to achieve their objectives, leading to genre-bending, mixing or embedding.

Secondly, CGA 'develops the nature and function of discursive practices

of professionals by integrating them with their professional practices, in particular focusing on the role of language in achieving their professional objectives in everyday practice' (*Critical* 11). CGA studies the role of genres in professional practices – their usage, purpose, necessity, and their value in professional cultures.

Lastly, CGA 'employs a theoretical framework which is essentially multiperspective and multidimensional requiring, specifically, integration of various perspectives on, and methods available for, the study of discursive and professional practices, especially those used in disciplinary and professional contexts' (*Critical* 11). Bhatia suggests that a genre analyst should employ a variety of frameworks and perspectives to produce a successful genre analysis. A genre analyst should create a suitable framework for the analysis of the genre in question.

> In general,
>
> critical genre theory views generic versatility, dynamism, the role of professional practice and that of disciplinary and professional culture as necessary components needed to be taken into account. These issues help us understand why genres as conventionalized constructs allow expert members of disciplinary and professional communities to exploit generic resources to express not only "private" but also organisational intentions within the constructs of "socially recognized communicative purposes". (*Critical* 10)

2.4.3   Main ideas and goals of CGA

- Criticality

In order to differentiate his newly proposed genre theory conception from already existing genre analysis, Bhatia decides to add the word 'critical' to its label. In his perception, CGA should be viewed as a critical theory which 'encourages the capacity to demystify, understand, explain and account for the kinds of professional practices in which specialist users are engaged in their everyday professional life' (*Critical* 27). Thus, when applying CGA to a genre, the objective is not only to describe and evaluate the resulting data, but also explain the results with respect to real-life professional practices of the writers.

Opposite to Critical Discourse Analysis, CGA 'is not necessarily oriented toward radical social change or even toward the analysis of society, but instead focuses on rigorous analysis of texts in contexts, in all their manifestations' (*Critical* 27).

In doing so, the analyst executing CGA is capable of accounting for why professional writers construct, use and exploit genres the way they do. CGA aims at professional practices embedded in professional cultures, while Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on societies across professions.

> To sum it up, Bhatia views his enhanced genre theory as a theory which:
> is not simply meant to describe and explain language use, but also to account for professional practices in an attempt to investigate why and how professionals create, disseminate and consume specialized knowledge and exploit available semiotic resources and modes of communication to achieve their professional goals. (*Critical* 27)

- Interdiscursivity

Bhatia views interdiscursivity as being 'central to our understanding of the complexities of professional genres' and, claiming that he devotes a large part of his work to the explanation and justification of this statement (*Critical* 34). Simply put, he defines interdiscursivity as 'interactions across and between genres resulting primarily from text-external factors' (*Critical* 34). What kind of interactions? What are the text-external factors? What happens when genres interact? These questions will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

To answer the first question and explain the interactions that happen across and between genres, it should be made clear that appropriations of generic resources can happen on three levels of contextualisation (Critical 37). Either the generic resources are on the level of professional genres, professional practices, or professional cultures. As an example of interdiscursive appropriation of generic resources on the level of professional practice Bhatia gives a process of colonisation of arbitration practice by litigation practice (*Critical* 51). Appropriation across professional cultures is illustrated by presenting analysis of fundraising practices which are appropriated by practitioners to the culture of marketing (*Critical* 51). Lastly, as an example of interactions across professional genres Bhatia chooses corporate annual reports where he finds four kinds of discourse: accounting, finance, public relations and legal disclaimer (*Critical* 91). These four discourses put into the same discursive space then result in creation of a hybrid genre. The three kinds of appropriations explained in this paragraph are graphically illustrated in Figure 2.8 below.

Interdiscursivity

Appropriation of Generic Resources

Professional Genres   Professional Practices   Professional Cultures

Hybridity

Genre-Mixing   Genre-Embedding   Genre Bending
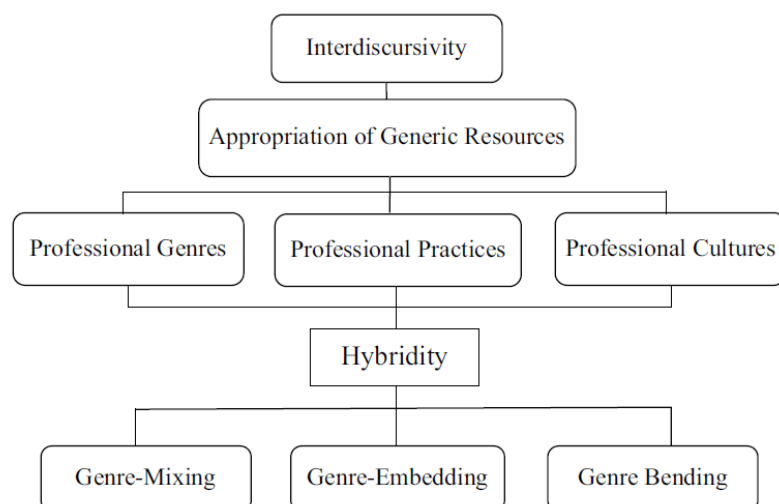
Figure 2.8: Interdiscursivity and generic hybridity (*Critical* 37)

Intertextuality defined as 'the appropriation of text-internal contributors to a specific genre' does not lead to genre hybridity, while interdiscursivity, as the appropriation of text-external factors, 'encourages innovative attempts to create various forms of hybrid and relatively novel constructs by appropriating and exploiting established conventions or resources associated with other genres and practices' (*Critical* 12, 39). Generic hybridization then can create a certain amount of tension between generic integrity and appropriation of generic resources. Nevertheless, even genres serving distinct communicative purposes or belonging to different colonies can happen to be appropriated without creating a tension. For example, promotional genres (especially advertising), which are highly invasive, most commonly enter informative genres. Even though the primary functions of promotional and informative genres are completely different, their appropriation works very well. Bhatia explains that this could be ascribed to 'advertisers [who] are constantly making creative attempts to innovate rhetorical strategies to disguise advertising messages as editorial content' (*Critical* 41). Thus, we can see that generic appropriations are not limited by its communicative functions.

Professional writers are aware that genres are flexible, and they take advantage of that. They 'give expression to their "private intentions" within socially accepted communicative practices and shared generic norms' and by doing so, sometimes

the expressed 'private intentions' lead to appropriation of generic resources with another genre creating a new hybrid genre (*Critical* 36). This becomes a very interesting topic for linguistic analysis. One of the aims of this thesis is to uncover the interdiscursively exploited generic resources in corporate annual reports, namely in letters to shareholders, and account for their origin.

- Multiperspectivization and multimodality

Since genre analysis has gradually shifted its focus to a more complex features of genre construction, it has become increasingly demanding on analysts. Genre analysts are required to explain not only textual features but also wide contextual factors influencing the discourse. This shift calls for a multidimensional and multiperspective framework (*Critical* 57). Depending on the selected genre, the analyst decides the variety of used analyses and methods, and the analyst decides how to integrate the selected procedures to acquire an efficient genre analytical framework.

Bhatia suggests that a successful Critical Genre Analysis, or genre analysis of any kind, should draw on various types of data (*Critical* 57). Firstly, it relies on textual data that reflects discursive practices of professional communities. Then, it draws on ethnographic data, and socio-cognitive and institutional data 'since it involves working with historically and structurally grounded accounts of the conditions under which systems of genre are constructed, interpreted, used and exploited by expert members of disciplinary cultures to achieve their typical goals' (*Critical* 65). The aim of multidimensional and multiperspective framework in genre analysis is to bridge the gap between the academy and the professions (*Critical* 81).

- Goals of Critical Genre Analysis

Bhatia claims that goals of CGA could be plenty. Nevertheless, he gives a list of likely goals that an analyst could strive to achieve when choosing to use CGA:

- Accounting for professional practice:

Genre theories have been too much interested in standardized and idealized generic forms which widened the gap between the realities of professional world and the genre theory. Bhatia suggests that genre analysts should aim to reduce the discrepancies between theory and reality by enhancing the genre analysis framework by studying professional practices (*Critical* 108).

- De-mystifying interdiscursive nature of professional genres:

By de-mystifying Bhatia means that the analyst's task is also to account for the 'manipulation of genre conventions by expert members of professional communities' and explain how professional writers often bend generic norms with the aim to implicitly express their 'private intentions within the framework of socially shared generic conventions' (*Critical* 58).

- Accounting for professional identities:

Professionals give expression to several identities in the same piece of discourse: professional, organizational, social, and individual identity. Genre analysts should be interested in how professionals incorporate these identities in their discourses.

- Understanding professional communication as interdiscursive performance:

CGA is concerned with the recipient's understanding in real life contexts as well.

- Providing evidence-based pedagogical insights:

It is crucial to focus on the gap between the genre theory and practising professionals by studying the specialist competence. Understanding discursive and professional practices will help genre experts and teachers to bridge the gap between academy and the professional world.

2.5 De-mystifying a letter to shareholders

The aim of this thesis is to account for the nature of letters to shareholders which are embedded in the genre of corporate annual reports. Applying Critical Genre Analysis on letters to shareholders, the next chapter *3 Practical part* specifies the area of research, presents the analysed corpus and explains the particular steps of the text analysis. It opens with a detailed account of contextual features, followed by an analysis of various lexico-grammatical features and lastly pays heed to rhetorical moves, metaphors and modes of persuasion. Once again, it is important to bear in mind that CGA attempts 'to demystify, understand, explain and account' for why authors of genres write the way they do (*Critical* 23).

3 Practical part

This chapter follows the previous theoretical part and introduces the practical analysis of the corpus. Having the base in the theoretical framework, it starts with subchapter *3.1 Demarcation of the area of interest* which details the focus of the analysis. After that, the subchapter *3.2 Selected companies* accounts for the criteria for selecting letters for the corpus. Finally, 3.3 Analysing the corpus dives straight into the analysis of the corpus. In the last section, the subchapter provides a summary of the analysis' results.

3.1 Demarcation of the area of interest

The genre *corporate annual report* which belongs to the reporting colony and the promotional colony as well, comprises four different discourses: accounting, finance, public relations discourse, and legal disclaimer (*Critical* 91). As shown in Figure 3.1, out of these four discourses, public relations discourse, represented by CEO's letter to shareholders, carries the most recontextualized information from the accounting and finance discourse. Bhatia notes that the 'discourses are rather different in accessibility to their intended readership' and 'also vary considerably in terms of technicality as well as complexity of information presented' (*Critical* 101). A letter to shareholders is the most accessible text from annual reports, since it is the least demanding on readers in terms of its expertise and technicality.
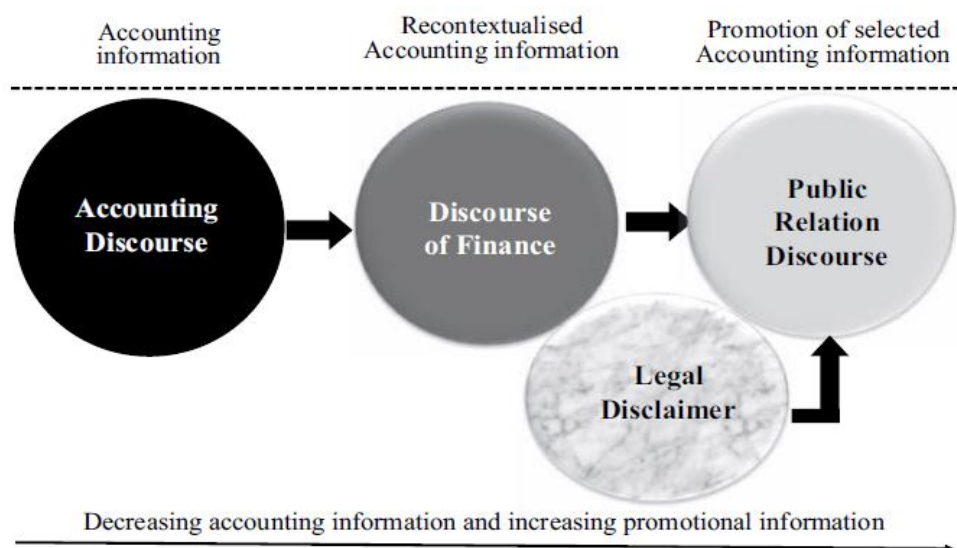
Figure 3.1: Four discourses (*Critical* 91)

As such, letters to shareholders present the least dependable information of annual reports. Nevertheless, they draw on credibility of other parts of annual reports. Letters benefit mainly from the accounting discourse which contains information audited by certified accountants, and as such, accounting discourse works as a trustworthy and reliable base for further recontextualization present in letters. Letters are aimed to reassure shareholders that the company's performance has promising outlook and sometimes aims at minority shareholders who 'often lack expertise and even linguistic skills to fully understand the implications of the accounting discourse' and because of that, they seek for information in letters (*Critical* 103). Letters offer more understandable statements and, for letters are placed in the same discursive space together with the credible accounting data, shareholders are likely to consider these statements credible as well.

Colonization by promotional genres in annual reports is most observable in letters to shareholders. Annual reports originally belong to the reporting colony, but they are constantly influenced by the trending colonization by promotional genres. In case of letters, the colonization of annual reports and successive genre-bending is caused by professional public relations writers who include their private or corporate intentions into the genre. The private intentions usually comprise a positive description of corporate performance and forward-looking statements.

Therefore, the main interest of this thesis is to understand how the professional writers of letters abuse and exploit linguistic and other resources in order to highlight positive performance or conversely, obscure negative performance, so that they would enhance the company's image in the eyes of annual report recipients, who are chiefly shareholders. For this purpose, a comparison between companies that performed a successful year and contrastingly, companies that did not have a successful year will be conducted.

The model framework for the analysis is based on Bhatia's research on corporate annual reports published in *Critical Genre Analysis* in 2017 (89). Bhatia was first interested in the genre of corporate annual reports when Enron Corporation filed for bankruptcy in 2001 and its annual report did not show any indications that the company was heading towards bankruptcy. In contrast to Bhatia's research, this diploma thesis aims to focus solely on one part of ARs – letters to shareholders. Letters indicate the highest degree of genre bending and as such show a great potential for an interesting genre analysis.

3.2 Selected companies

After clarifying the area of interest, it is necessary to select criteria for choosing the appropriate texts for the corpus. The corpus of texts analysed in this diploma thesis consists of twenty letters to shareholders. The criteria for including a letter into the corpus were the following: date of annual report issuance, country of origin, and, importantly, its performance.

Speaking about the releasing year, for consistency reasons, I decided to look at annual reports which were released in this millennium, that is since 2000 up to this day. This decision has proved to be practical, since the older the annual report, the more difficult it was to find it. Next, also for consistency reasons, I decided to analyse United States-based companies only, since companies from other countries are subject to different regulatory rules in terms of content of annual reports.

The corpus is divided into two contrasting groups of letters. The first group of letters comprises annual reports of companies that performed a successful year, i.e. the company was profitable. The second group of letters comprises companies whose profitability suffered and as a result, the company filed for bankruptcy either during the year of the annual report issuance or during the following year. For the sake of clarity, each company (letter to shareholders) has its specific code that will be used for references in the text. Companies with positive performance are indicated by codes starting with *P*; companies with negative performance are indicated by codes starting with *N*. In case of referring to the whole group of positive letters, an abbreviation *PL* will be used. In case of referring to negative letters, an abbreviation *NL* will be used.

The first bunch of annual reports of companies that performed a successful year is based on an annual ranking of top publicly-listed companies which is called Fortune 500, and which is compiled yearly by the American business magazine Fortune (Fortune). The magazine selects the companies according to their revenues. **Chyba! N enalezen zdroj odkazů.** below enumerates the companies with positive performance used for the analysis.

In the table the following information can be found: code, company's name, format of the annual report, year of publication, and how the company ranked in Fortune 500 during the respective year of publication.[1]

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[1] In terms of the format of the selected ARs, it was previously mentioned that some companies prefer to combine the letter with the 10-K Form. If it is the case, the annual report is marked AR + 10-K in Table 3.1.

Companies with positive performance				
	Code	Company	Format	Year of AR's publication	Fortune 500 rating
1.	**P1**	Cardinal Health	AR + 10-K	2009	#18
2.	**P2**	Chevron	AR	2014	#3
3.	**P3**	Citigroup	AR	2016	#29
4.	**P4**	Express Script	AR + 10-K	2013	#24
5.	**P5**	ExxonMobil	AR	2016	#2
6.	**P6**	The Home Depot	AR + 10-K	2007	#17
7.	**P7**	Hewlett-Packard Company	AR + 10-K	2012	#10
8.	**P8**	Marathon Petroleum Corporation	AR + 10-K	2015	#25
9.	**P9**	McKesson Corporation	AR + 10-K	2014	#15
10.	**P10**	Walmart	AR	2016	#1

Table 3.1: List of companies with positive performance

There exist many lists ranking the most successful companies of the world (just like Fortune 500 or for example Global 2000 released by magazine Forbes) (Forbes). However, unsuccessful companies do not have any unified list. Therefore, the second bunch of letters of companies with negative performance was chosen according to various lists carried out by different web magazines concerned with the business world.[2] Table 3.2 enumerates the companies and instead of its ranking, the table gives a date of filing for bankruptcy.[3]

Companies with negative performance				
	Code	Company	Format	Year of AR publication	Filed for bankruptcy
1.	**N1**	AmTrust Financial Services, Inc.	AR + 10-K	2009	November, 2009
2.	**N2**	BreitBurn Energy Partners LP	AR + 10-K	2015	May, 2016
3.	**N3**	Circuit City Store Inc.	AR + 10-K	2008	November, 2008
4.	**N4**	CIT Group Inc.	AR	2009	November, 2009

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[2] The lists can be found in Works Cited.
[3] The original letters to shareholders forming the corpus are stored on the enclosed CD.

5.	**N5**	Cobalt International Energy Inc.	AR + 10-K	2016	December, 2017
6.	**N6**	The Colonial Bancgroup, Inc.	AR + 10-K	2008	August 2009
7.	**N7**	Endeavour International Corporation	AR + 10-K	2013	October, 2014
8.	**N8**	Enron	AR	2000	December, 2001
9.	**N9**	Lehman Brothers	AR	2007	September, 2008
10.	**N10**	Tidewater Inc.	AR + 10-K	2016	May, 2017

Table 3.2: List of companies with negative performance

3.3   Analysing the corpus

The analysis starts with subchapter *3.3.1 General contextual features of annual reports* which gives a detailed description of contextual characteristics of ARs, while focusing predominantly on its sub-genre letters to shareholders. Contextual features, or as Biber and Conrad call them situational features, draw on Bhatia's proposition that it is right to begin a genre analysis with a description of contextual features (39, *Analysing Genre* 63).

Contextual features are followed by an analysis of lexis and grammar. Subchapter *3.3.2* is divided into two sections. The first one concentrates on nominal structures in letters, specifically it focuses on negative and positive nominal structures and thematic structures drawing on Thomas's research (1997). The second section concentrates on verbs, i.e. tense, passive constructions, process verbs and agency. The verbs section is mainly based on Thomas's study as well, which means that the verbs are approached from systemic functional linguistics point of view.

The next subchapter *3.3.3 Rhetorical moves* is based on Bhatia's rhetorical move-structure (*Critical* 100). He establishes seven rhetorical moves typical for letters. However, the descriptions of these moves are quite general, and the analysis of the corpus proves that Bhatia's rhetorical moves of letters should be elaborated in more detail.

The last two subchapters of the analysis are concerned with the persuasive nature of letters. Firstly, subchapter *3.3.4 Metaphors* looks at metaphors characteristic for letters. After that, the analysis continues with exploring the classical means of persuasion in subchapter *3.3.5 Classical modes of persuasion*.

3.3.1 General contextual features of annual reports

Biber and Conrad together with Bhatia agree that the first task for a researcher using genre analysis should be identification and description of contextual features or situational characteristics (*Analysing Genre* 63, 39). Based on Biber and Conrad's framework of situational characteristics, the author analyses *communicative purpose*, *topic*, *participants* and *relations among participants*, *channel*, and *production circumstances* and *setting* (40). Some of the characteristics coincide with Bhatia's general configuration of the contextual features like *communicative purpose* and *participants* (*Critical* 69). In some cases, Bhatia uses a different name for the contextual feature: for *channel* he uses *medium*, for *topic* he uses *nature of content*. In contrast to Biber and Conrad, Bhatia adds two more features: *discursive space*, *style* and *network of interdiscursively relevant genre* (*Critical* 69). The succeeding contextual analysis combines both, Biber and Conrad's and Bhatia's contextual/situational features. These features will complete the information about annual reports found in 2.2. Also, since this thesis is mainly focused on letters to shareholders, a sub-genre of ARs, the analysis will set other parts of ARs aside.

- Communicative purpose:

There are two main communicative purposes of annual reports. The first one is to inform readers about corporate performance of the year in question. Many tables, figures, descriptions, and to some extent also evaluations concerning the company's successes and failures from the company's previous year are given to readers. The second communicative purpose derives from a colony of promotional genres. Though restricted by statutory requirements, authors of annual reports still seek ways to incorporate their private intentions into the text. Promoting the company by presenting it in a positive light, presenting attractive future actions, and aiming to eventually persuade the readers that the company is a good choice to spend their money on all become the second communicative purpose. Persuasion is also a prominent communicative purpose of ARs.

 In terms of letter to shareholders, promotional features can outbalance the reporting features. While the rest of annual reports is based on factual information and the promotional features are suppressed, letters to shareholders are more speculative since they can be largely based on author's opinions.

- Discursive space:

Annual reports are issued as separate publications and there are no limits on their length, which, therefore, tends to vary. Some annual reports reach more than one hundred pages, others can be only fifty pages long. Nevertheless, a current trend shows increasing number of pages. The length of letters to shareholders varies as well. Letters covering only a half of a page can be found, and, on contrary, some letters can reach up to ten or more pages. The length of letters forming the corpus of this thesis also indicates such a variability. When comparing PL with NL, it was found out that there is only a slight difference between their average length as shown in Table 3.3 below. It cannot be said then that the performance of a company would have any effect on the length of the letter.

Length of PL and NL			
Code	Total number of words	Code	Total number of words
P1	195	N1	1026
P2	813	N2	614
P3	1734	N3	1134
P4	1098	N4	536
P5	958	N5	366
P6	1209	N6	1108
P7	1130	N7	366
P8	323	N8	1746
P9	492	N9	1949
P10	1260	N10	1207
AM	921,2	AM	1005,2

Table 3.3: Length of PL and NL

- Nature of content / topic:

General topic of annual reports is that of business and marketplace. Predominantly, annual reports contain financial information. Every company includes a slightly different content though. Nevertheless, in most cases, the corporate annual report could be separated into four basic sections based on their content: accounting information, financial description and evaluation, public relations section and legal disclaimer (*Critical* 91). The main topic of ARs is the company's performance from its previous fiscal year.

- Participants and their relationship:

Creating an annual report is a collaborative work. Different parts of annual report are written by different professionals, ranging from certified accountants and auditors,

professional public relations writers focused on disclosure documents, financial experts and lawyers, to the Chief Executive Officer or President of the company, not speaking about graphic designers, photographers and so on. Therefore, one can label the addressor as being institutional. Apart from the letter to shareholders, in which the addressor is clear, annual reports do not indicate who wrote the text.

Biber suggests that social characteristics of the addressor are vital for analysing texts (41). In letters to shareholders, the authors are usually middle-aged authors, professionals in their occupation who hold one of the leading positions within a company. Therefore, letters contain professional business or financial terminology and strong leadership statements put in a very confident tone (though in other parts of the annual report the terminology is usually more advanced).

Although most of letters to shareholders are signed by a single author, rarely does the process of letter creation involve one person only. Thomas comments that 'the product embodies "the corporate-speak" representative of the top management of the company' (Thomas 48). When studying the genre of letters to shareholders we also have to take into account, then, that it is not written by a single person but by a group of professionals in its field that cooperate on creating a perfect whole.

The targeted recipients of annual reports are current or potential shareholders and investors, employees, the business world as such, or just anyone interested in the text. As the name *letter to shareholders* suggests, letters aim principally at shareholders.

In terms of the relationship between the addressor and the addressee, the genre is not directly interactive and, since annual reports are addressed to a wide range of readers, the level of shared background knowledge varies extensively. Letters to shareholders become the most accessible part of the annual report because the writer knowingly employs a common format (a letter) and less specialist knowledge to appeal to as wide an audience as possible.

- Medium / Channel:

Annual reports are released in the written form. Typically, they are published publicly on the official company websites, or, sent to shareholders and other associates via email. Unlimited space allows the writers to develop their ideas without any space restrictions.

- Production circumstances and setting

Annual reports are planned ahead, drawing on the conventional model of annual reports. Some parts of annual reports are revised by auditors. For more detailed information about production of annual reports, see chapter *2.2.3*.

In terms of setting, the writers and readers do not share the same physical context. The place of communication is public because the text is publicly released, and the time of communication refers to a historical time period, more precisely, to a previous fiscal year.

- Style:

Speaking about the style, annual reports are quite varied since they consist of four different discourses. Each style depends on the communicative nature of the discourse in question. Accounting discourse does not consist of much text but, more typically, it employs tables and figures to convey the information. Financial discourse employs more textual information but uses plenty of numerical data as well. Public relations discourse and legal disclaimer are primarily textual in nature.

Also, it is important to note that styles of different companies can vary. Nevertheless, there are visible patterns. While the public relations discourse usually employs positive descriptions and evaluations, other parts employ a more matter-of-fact style.

- Network of interdiscursively relevant genre:

The annual report genre is embedded in two genre colonies, the reporting and promotional genre colony. The genre serves two communicative purposes taken from these two colonies. Therefore, it is interconnected with a large number of genres. Focusing on the annual report as a promotional genre, it is connected to advertisements or sales promotion. An annual report as a reporting genre is influenced by business reports of various kinds (it is most closely related to the form 10-K), like business letters, financial reports, legal statements, and other disclosure documents, such as quarterly reports.

In terms of its format, letters are most closely related to a sales letter due to its promotional nature. In terms of its persuasive nature, annual reports share the persuasiveness with political speeches.

3.3.2   Lexis and Grammar

Keeping the contextual features in mind, Bhatia moves further to text-internal analysis starting with investigating lexis and grammar. He notices 'two important aspects' found in letters which are: 'a very high incidence of present perfect tense' and 'a very high incidence nominals that express business concepts, and those that form the basis for forward-looking trends, including the ones associated with positive attributes' (*Critical* 98). The first part of the latter aspect, nominals expressing business concepts, seems to be natural for a genre used in a professional business community and I think that it is not necessary to analyse it deeper. However, the thesis will look into the level of 'positivity' set up in letters. Also, I will analyse verb tenses that occur in letters and whether the present perfect tense is used as much as Bhatia claims. Apart from tenses, the analysis will look into passive constructions, readability, process verbs, and agency. Moving back from examining verbs, the analysis starts with analysing the level of negativity in letters and continues with analysing the thematic structures found in the texts.

3.3.2.1   Nominals

As already indicated above, Bhatia starts analysing letters with looking at nominals in the text, noting that the text contains 'a very high incidence of nominals that express business concepts' (*Critical* 98). Of course, this is typical for texts embedded in business contexts. A high incidence of business terms differentiates the letter to shareholders from other letter types (e.g. a love letter, request letter). At the same time, these business concepts and terms project positive and forward-looking image of the achievements (*Critical* 99), for instance *reduced our debt burden, extended our debt maturities, a more reliable and less expensive source of funds, improve returns to our shareholders, ensure a stable source of funding*.

Though illustrating a certain level of expertise by using business terms, the letters predominantly use terms that are easily understandable even for readers that are not professional investors or businessmen. Authors usually do not dive deep into detailed information (there is a space for that in other parts of ARs) but focus on generally known terms connected to the publicly held company, some examples of which are shown in Table 3.4: Examples of nominals expressing business concepts in letters below. This confirms that the author keeps in mind his target audience – apart

from professionals from business environment, the text aims also at general unprofessional public.

Examples of nominals expressing business concepts in letters
Examples
small businesses, middle market companies, financial institutions, capital, employers, strong franchises, customized financing solutions, vendor finance, debt burden, pre-packaged bankruptcy filing, bank holding company, balance sheet, Board of Directors, risk management, senior management ranks

Table 3.4: Examples of nominals expressing business concepts in letters

Although Bhatia emphasizes the positive and forward-looking image of letters, this thesis, contrariwise, looks at the level of negativity found in the letters based on Abrahamson and Amir's study that identifies words with negative connotations in letters to shareholders (*Critical* 99, Abrahamson and Amir 1160). The second part of analysing nominals investigates thematic structures in letters based on a study by Jane Thomas who identified 'an increase in nonhuman agents' which coincides with profits decrease (Thomas 47).

- Negativity in letters to shareholders

The negativity analysis of letters is based on a study by Abrahamson and Amir called "The Information Content of the President's Letter to Shareholders" which aims at identifying negative information in letters to shareholders. They choose to focus on negative words over the positive ones because according to them, 'a quick look at a number of president's letters reveals that they are "sugar coated". That is, they are full of positive statements' and as such it would be 'a waste of effort to sift through this large number of meaningless statements to find the important ones' (Abrahamson and Amir 1163). They elaborate on this statement by claiming that 'reports of negative outcomes, to the contrary, are much more infrequent and deal typically with much more important matters for the firm' (Abrahamson and Amir 1163). Thus, an analysis of negative words seems to be a strategic choice for the purposes of this thesis as well.

Within their study, Abrahamson and Amir succeeded in creating a list of words that carry negative connotations. For being coded as negative, a word must have met several conditions. Without detailing the conditions too much, a word was marked as

negative when 'the word mentioned a negative organizational outcome' or 'if there was a mention of a negative effect of the environment on the organization' (Abrahamson and Amir 1161). On the other hand, a word was not coded as negative if 'the sentence did not mention any negative organizational outcome or a negative environmental effect', 'if there was a mention of a negative environmental effect, but no mention of a negative effect on the organization itself' or 'if there was a mention of a negative environmental effect, but an explicit denial that it negatively affected the organization' (Abrahamson and Amir 1161). To sum it up, 'words which reflect unfavorably on corporate goals are classified as negative' (Hildebrandt and Snyder 8). The conditions then narrowed down the words to a list consisting of 56 words considered to have negative connotations. It is important to note that Abrahamson and Amir's corpus consisted of more than 2500 letters and the process of determining whether a word is negative or not comprised several stages, each carefully judging the word's polarity. As such, the list gives a reliable source to be applied on the present corpus. Some instantiations of the negative words are *bankruptcy*, *crash*, *crisis*, *failed*, *loss*, *problems*, *suffered*, *weakness*. The complete list of the words can be found in Appendix 1 in *Appendices*.

Firstly, I searched for the words in NL and found 47 entries in total which is summarized in Table 3.5 below.[4] Further, I divided the entries into two groups: negative words that complied with the conditions and negative words which did not (for example the word *tough* in *We have the proven strength to get through this **tough** environment and continue to succeed when conditions improve* in N6 is not considered negative since it presents 'an explicit denial that [a negative environmental problem] negatively affected the organization'). After dividing the words, there were only 21 entries left which complied with the conditions for being negative. The most frequent ones were *difficult* and *downturn*, each having four entries. Interestingly, the majority of the entries did not comply with the conditions, i.e. were used in a different sense than negative according to Abrahamson and Amir.

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[4] The negative words in letters were analysed with the help of an online corpus analysis software Sketch Engine (Scetch Engine).

	Negative words in NL				
	Total number of words	**Negative words**	**Percentage**	**Neg. words not included**	**Percentage**
N1	1026	0	**0**	3	**0,3**
N2	614	0	**0**	4	**0,7**
N3	1134	3	**0,3**	1	**0,1**
N4	536	1	**0,2**	0	**0**
N5	366	0	**0**	0	**0**
N6	1108	2	**0,2**	9	**0,8**
N7	366	0	**0**	1	**0,3**
N8	1746	0	**0**	2	**0,1**
N9	1949	4	**0,2**	2	**0,1**
N10	1207	11	**0,9**	4	**0,3**
AM			**0,2 %**		**0,3 %**

Table 3.5: Negative words in NL

Words from the list in PL reached 12 entries only, out of which only 1 entry complied with the conditions and was marked as negative, and it was the word *difficult* again. Table 3.6 shows numerical results of the entries found. The rest of the words, the ones that did not meet the conditions, were for example *loss*, *crisis*, *poor*, *problems*, and most frequently also *difficult*.

	Negative words in PL				
	Total number of words	**Negative words**	**Percentage**	**Neg. words not included**	**Percentage**
P1	195	0	**0**	0	**0**
P2	813	0	**0**	2	**0,2**
P3	1734	0	**0**	3	**0,2**
P4	1098	0	**0**	3	**0,3**
P5	958	0	**0**	0	**0**
P6	1209	1	**0,1**	1	**0,1**
P7	1130	0	**0**	1	**0,1**
P8	323	0	**0**	0	**0**
P9	492	0	**0**	0	**0**
P10	1260	0	**0**	1	**0,1**
AM			**0,01 %**		**0,1 %**

Table 3.6: Negative words in PL

After laying down the numbers of negative words in the text, I expressed the number of entries also in percentage with respect to the total number of words in respective letters. As we can see, the percentages are very low, all being under 1 %. However, the percentages indicate a considerably big difference between NL and PL.

While negative words in PL amount to 0,01 % only, NL contain 0,2% of negative words. This can be explained simply by the company's performance, since successful companies often do not have negative events to write about and vice versa. Abrahamson and Amir's study concludes 'that high relative negativity is associated with poor performance' which also complies with results found here (Rutherford 356).

The results are also supported by another study carried out by Hildebrandt and Snyder who concentrated on the Pollyanna principle in business writing. They claim that 'negative words are less frequent in a financially good year than a bad year' (10).

As is evident from the results, the overall presence of negative words in NL and PL is very low. Letters to shareholders are partly promotional and hence, they avoid including negative information. As Bhatia says: 'the above-average incidence of positive attributes is common and […] its connection to business concepts and forward-looking trends leads readers to higher expectations of future performance' (*Critical* 98). The authors strategically include positive information. This complies also with the Pollyanna hypothesis which 'asserts that there is a universal tendency to use evaluatively positive words […] more frequently and directly than evaluatively negative words […] in communicating' (Hildebrandt and Snyder 6). In their study, Hildebrandt and Snyder proved that all in all 'positive words occur more frequently than negative words in annual letters to stockholders regardless of the corporation's financial position (10). No matter the performance, letters always paint a positive picture of the company.

- Thematic structures

By a thematic structure, Thomas designates 'the part of the clause that serves as a point of departure for the message – what message is about' and describes thematic structures as often being nominal groups, but also adverbial groups or prepositional phrases (56). She differentiates two types of themes used in letters: the personal pronoun *we* and a variety of inanimate nominal groups, such as *fiscal 1988* or other typical business terms (56). In her study, she found a connection between increase in inanimate nominal groups agents and decline in profitability.

This thesis includes the analysis of thematic structures as well because Thomas argues that the increasing number of nonhuman agents in the letters 'distances [the management] from the cause of the problems by presenting as themes such circumstantial factors as "machine tool markets" and "fiscal 1988" (Thomas 58).

It would be interesting then to test whether her claim applies also to the corpus of this thesis.

The results of the thematic structure analysis in Table 3.7 and Table 3.8 below illustrate that the analysis of the letters show agreement with Thomas's claim – there is an increase in inanimate nominal groups in NL. Nevertheless, the difference between use of the pronoun *we* and inanimate nominal groups is not that significant as in her study. We could explain this by realizing that Thomas analysed letters from a single company, written by the same writers, while this thesis compiles letters from various companies each having a slightly different style of writing.

Use of the pronoun we and of inanimate nominal groups in NL				
	We		Inanimate Nominal Groups	
	Times Used	Percentage	Times Used	Percentage
N1	30	62,5	18	37,5
N2	14	46,7	16	53,3
N3	30	65,2	16	34,8
N4	10	45,4	12	54,5
N5	3	33,3	6	66,7
N6	36	53,7	31	46,3
N7	13	56,5	10	43,5
N8	46	43,8	59	56,2
N9	55	56,7	42	43,3
N10	27	47,4	30	52,6
		51,1		**48,9**

Table 3.7: Use of the pronoun we and of inanimate nominal groups as themes in NL

Use of the pronoun we and of inanimate nominal groups in PL				
	We		Inanimate Nominal Groups	
	Times Used	Percentage	Times Used	Percentage
P1	1	12,5	7	87,5
P2	32	66,7	16	33,3
P3	47	60,3	31	39,7
P4	32	59,3	22	40,7
P5	22	51,2	21	48,8
P6	44	66,7	22	33,3
P7	41	66,1	21	33,9
P8	16	69,6	7	30,4
P9	12	70,6	5	29,4
P10	57	69,5	25	30,5
		59,3		**40,7**

Table 3.8: Use of the pronoun we and of inanimate nominal groups as themes in PL

The decrease in the number of inanimate nominal groups in PL can be explained by Thomas's claim that 'the credit for success can be attributed to the initiatives of the Chairman, the President, and their management team', i.e. the pronoun *we* suggests management's involvement in the actions (57). On the contrary, nominal groups as *the dramatic decline in global oil prices during 2015*, *this cycle*, *the challenge, this acquisition,* or *fiscal year 2008* suggest a detachment of the management from the actions.

Also, when we look at the pronoun *we* and what kind of information follows the pronoun, in terms of being a positive or negative outcome of the company's operation, there seems to be a higher incidence of the pronoun *we* connected to negative information in NL. Nevertheless, this can be ascribed to the fact, that NL tend to contain more negative information since PL companies usually do not write about negative events since their fiscal year they write about was successful. Still, the pronoun *we* is almost in all cases connected to positive information and by this 'the thematic relations between the management and the positive nature of the message are strongly foregrounded' and through that 'we see a picture of a company that is successful due to the actions and leadership of its management' (Thomas 59, 60).

The analysis of thematic structures also shows another interesting result. In NL there is a higher occurrence of outside factors that are affecting the company's performance or outside factors that influence the whole market and have an impact on the company itself and which cannot be influenced by the company's management. Examples of the outside factors are *the continued depressed level of oil prices throughout last year* (N10), *the resulting impact of deteriorating industry conditions on our revenues and profitability* (N10), *the extended downturn in commodity prices* (N2), *one of the most challenging banking years* (N6), and so on. In Thomas's analysis, 'in the years when the company did not make a profit, there is an emphasis on outside factors as the source of the problems' and this result agrees with the results of the present analysis because the number of outside factors in NL is almost four times higher than in PL (Thomas 58).

Also, it is interesting to note how the companies compare or distinguish themselves from their competitors, that is, other companies in the same industry. When the company presents positive information that elevates the company above the others, then the company excludes itself from others in the business as in N6 *so many banks were suffering as a result of their sub-prime lending exposure and other risky*

investments, Colonial steered clear of these problems, or in N8 *these capabilities enable us to provide highvalue products and services other wholesale service providers cannot.* On the other hand, when there is a negative information connected to the performance of the company, the company is likely to include itself within the group of other companies in the business, showing that they are not the only company that performed negatively as in N6 *we still have our work cut out for us, as do all banks*. In this case, the reason for negative performance is usually an outside factor. NL tend to include comparison to other companies in the industry into their letters much more often than PL.

3.3.2.2   Verbs

The use of various verb forms has been of great interest to many linguists attracted to genre analysis. And the field of business is of no exception to that. Within the frame of CGA analysis applied to letters, Bhatia notes a high incidence of the present perfect tense. The first chapter of verbs analysis is thus concerned with verb tenses. Furthermore, Thomas (1997) looks into occurrence of passive constructions in letters, which this diploma thesis relates to overall readability of letters as studied by Schroeder and Gibson (1990). After that, the analysis moves on to examining process verbs in the text according to Halliday's classification of verbs based on their transitivity. Lastly, the analysis of verbs in NL and PL studies the nature of their agents.

- Verb tenses

Bhatia emphasizes the increased presence of the present perfect in letters, however he does not give any concrete numbers of the present perfect tense occurrence with respect to other tenses. Therefore, his analysis of the present perfect tense calls for specification. This thesis decides to look into the occurrence of the present perfect tense with respect to other tenses in the texts, namely with respect to past simple, past perfect, present simple, future tense and modals. Comparing the incidence of each tense with respect to incidence of the other tenses gives a better insight into the choices that the writers make when writing a letter.

The results in Table 3.9 below display the occurrence of individual tenses in percentage. Notice that, as opposed to Bhatia's claim, the number of sentences having the verb in the present perfect tense is not very high when compared to other

verb forms. However, the results comply with other studies of verb tenses in letters. Past tense in NL is higher than in PL. This is supported by the claim that 'organizations with low performance may concentrate more on past than future events since efforts to justify performance may lead to a retrospective, as opposed to a prospective, focusing' (Kohut and Segars 17).

Verb structures expressing future, like *will* and *going to*, reveal an insignificant difference. One would suggest that unsuccessful companies would distract reader's attention form the past events by focusing on 'promising' future full of positive expectations. However, there seems to be no difference between NL and PL in terms of references to future actions. Kohut and Segars note that the obvious superiority of the past references over the references to the future can be ascribed to the fact that 'avoiding uncertainty in communicating firm performance may indicate a strategic communication decision' (17).

Verb tenses in NL and PL					
	Past simple/ Past perfect	Present perfect	Present simple	Will, Going to	Modals
NL	37,3	10,5	41,2	6,2	4,9
PL	28,3	8,0	52,0	7,9	3,8

Table 3.9: Verb tenses in NL and PL

Also, they note that low performance firms may be 'emphasizing future opportunities, over poor past financial performance [which could be] evidence of sound communication strategy at work' (Kohut and Segars 17). However, the incidence of future tenses in NL and PL in the analysed corpus exhibits exactly the opposite trend.

- Passive constructions and readability

I decided to tabulate the use of passive constructions, since Thomas in her study saw 'an increase in passives correlating with a decrease in profit' and she does not see it as 'surprising if we accept the assumption that the passive voice distance the messenger from the message' (Thomas 53).

Compared to PL, the results in Table 3.10 show a significantly larger percentage of passive structures in NL. A column in the table shows the number of times the passive voice was used in a specific letter, and on the right side of this column the number expressed in percentage (with respect to active voice) is indicated.

The larger percentage of passive structures in NL could be explained by Thomas who claims that the 'use of the passive voice is reserved for those occasions when the writer finds it advantageous to distance himself or herself from the message' (Thomas 52). This coincides also with the percentage of inanimate nominal groups occurring in the position of theme from the previous chapter. The increase in the inanimate nominal groups together with a larger percentage of passive constructions build up the objectivity of the letter by which the management distances itself from its actions. Letters of companies with lower performance seem to be more objective.

Passive structures in NL and PL					
Code	Times used	Percentage	Code	Times used	Percentage
N1	3	4,8	P1	0	0
N2	1	2,4	P2	1	1,9
N3	3	3,7	P3	1	0,9
N4	2	3,8	P4	0	0
N5	2	7,1	P5	2	3,6
N6	4	4,2	P6	0	0
N7	1	3,3	P7	2	2,2
N8	6	4,3	P8	0	0
N9	2	1,7	P9	0	0
N10	4	5,0	P10	0	0
AM		4,0 %			0,9 %

Table 3.10: Passive constructions in NL and PL

Schroeder and Gibson studied passive constructions in letters and compared the passives to other parts of AR - footnotes and MD&A. They came to a conclusion that the passive voice is one of the aspects that affects readability and say that 'narrative written with extensive use of the passive voice is less forceful, more wordy and less interesting' (80).

To study readability of texts, they also propose looking at other aspects affecting readability. They propose the Flesch Index for being the most suitable index for establishing readability (80). The Flesch Index formula analyses average sentence length and average number of syllables per word based on which a text's readability index is estimated. The ranking scale of the index is from 0-100 and the higher the score, the easier readability.

Flesch Index Reading Ease online analyser was used for the readability analysis. The indexes in Table 3.11 show that there is hardly any difference between readability

of NL and PL being 41,9 for NL and 42,0 for PL (Web FX). Based on these results, performance of a company does not have effect on the level of readability of letters to shareholders. According to the Flesch Reading Ease Index the score 41,9 and 42 can be interpreted as being difficult to read (Readability Formulas).

Flesch Reading Ease Index in PL and NL			
Letter	**Readability index**	**Letter**	**Readability index**
N1	37,2	P1	24,9
N2	42,4	P2	46,3
N3	36,6	P3	45,0
N4	45,6	P4	49,1
N5	41,5	P5	27,7
N6	53,2	P6	48,7
N7	51,2	P7	43,2
N8	39,5	P8	44,6
N9	42,3	P9	31,8
N10	29,2	P10	59,0
AM	**41,9**		**42,0**

Table 3.11: Flesch Reading Ease Index in PL and NL

Another study was carried out by Subramarian et al. who measured the readability in entire ARs. In contrast to the results of this thesis, their analysis proves that the mean readability level of annual reports that performed well is lower than of those that did not perform well (Subramarian et al. 56). Contrasting the results with the results of Subramarian et al., it would be interesting to research which parts of ARs, in terms of their readability, Table 3.5demonstrate the largest difference between successful and unsuccessful companies

- Process verbs

As another step of her analysis, Thomas decides to examine transitivity of verbs based on Halliday's classification of process verbs. She defines transitivity as a property of verbs which 'describes a clause according to the kind of verb used, the participants, and the circumstances' and then, clause presents a process which is expressed by a verbal group (52). Halliday recognizes three main types of process in English transitivity system: material, mental and relational (171). Additional borderline process types are behavioural, verbal and existential. A Table 3.12 below clarifies the process verb types.

Process verb types and their meanings		
Process Type	**Kind of meaning conveyed**	*Examples*
Material: **verbs of doing or** **verbs of happening**	movement, doing, occurring, action	*emerge, occur, happen, grow, create, make, prepare, produce, come, go*
Mental: **verbs of perception, affection, or cognition**	sensing, feeling, seeing, thinking	*perceive, notice, see, feel, expect, believe, think, consider, know, like*
Relational: **verbs of attribution or identification**	being, identifying, attributing	*be, remain, keep, become, represent, include, serve as*
Behavioural: **verbs of behaving**	smiling, daydreaming, hesitating	*watch, lie, walk, sleep, look*
Verbal: **verbs of saying**	said, asked, told	*say, speak, report, ask, announce, talk*
Existential	there is, there are	*there is, there exist*

Table 3.12: Process verbs taken and adjusted from Thomas (53)

As the first step of the process verbs analysis, I scanned all the verb forms in NL and PL and determined which process verb category they belong to according to Halliday's criteria (*An Introduction to Functional Grammar*). The results in Table 3.13 reveal that the majority of verbs belongs to the category of material verbs, i.e. verbs of doing or happening, which is logical when we consider the subject matter of letters (a review of past year's company operation). Also, Thomas says that 'one writing strategy often suggested to students of business communication is to use "active" verbs, or verbs of "doing" more often than verbs of "being"' (52). Therefore, it is not a surprise that material verbs represent more than 50% of verb forms in NL and PL. After comparing NL and PL, the occurrence of material verbs does not display a big difference, although it 'might be expected to decrease as company actions coincide with decreased profitability' (Thomas 53). Relational verbs, like verbs *be* or *have*, add to the objectivity of letters and hence the expectation of material verbs decrease. However, the results do not meet this theory.

Process verbs in NL and PL		
Process verb type	NL	PL
Material verbs	56,1 %	51,3 %
Relational verbs	33,0 %	35,1 %
Mental verbs	7,0 %	9,1 %
Behavioural verbs	0,7 %	1,0 %
Verbal verbs	2,0 %	3,0 %
Existential verbs	1,3 %	0,2 %

Table 3.13: Mean percentage of process verbs in NL and PL

Another suggestion for analysis was to scan only the first and last paragraphs because 'beginnings generate a lasting first impression and provide a forecast of what is to follow; endings emphasize key points and help to shape readers' attitudes toward the writer and the subject matter' and as such they are 'crucial to the overall success of documents' (Thomas 54). Thomas's expectation was the same, namely that there would be an increase in objectivity, thus relational verbs, in letters presenting increasingly negative information. However, the trend seems to be the exact opposite from her hypothesis and in this case, the difference is much more evident.

Table 3.14 displays that the first and last paragraphs of NL contain 34,5 % of relational verbs, while these of PL amount to 49 %. The results go against Thomas's hypothesis, they however comply with her saying that business material verbs are much more favoured than the process verbs, because they express *actions*, *movement* and *doing* which is something that a potential shareholder wants to read. The shareholder wants to read about the company's growth, successful decisions made in the previous year and just generally, that the company is not stagnant. Hence, the lower percentage of relational verbs in NL could be only a strategic facade that is supposed to obscure the negative information.

Relational verbs in NL and PL			
Letter	Percentage	Letter	Percentage
N1	37,5	P1	62,5
N2	45,5	P2	42,9
N3	31,3	P3	60,0
N4	50,0	P4	41,7
N5	18,8	P5	60,0
N6	42,1	P6	26,7
N7	45,5	P7	41,7
N8	10,0	P8	41,7
N9	30,0	P9	57,1
N10	34,5	P10	55,6
AM	34,5 %		49,0 %

Table 3.14: Relational verbs in NL and PL

- Agency

As an extension to the analysis of process verbs, Thomas also looked at the animacy of agents. She claims that nonhuman agents also contribute to the increase of objectivity in texts (47). Just like in her analysis of process verbs, Thomas concentrates on the first and last paragraphs only. Following her example, the further analysis also dedicates to the first and last paragraphs of NL and PL.

Table 3.15 presents the results of the analysis of nonhuman agents in NL and PL which suggest an increase in objectivity since there is substantial increase in nonhuman agents in NL. Significantly higher incidence of nonhuman agents in NL 'suggests a shift of emphasis away from the writer(s) of the message', that is from the management (Thomas 55).

Nonhuman agents in NL and PL			
Letter	Percentage	Letter	Percentage
N1	60,0	P1	0
N2	100	P2	0
N3	45,5	P3	75,0
N4	20,0	P4	0
N5	50,0	P5	25,0
N6	54,5	P6	37,5
N7	33,3	P7	0
N8	75,0	P8	0
N9	50,0	P9	42,9
N10	50,0	P10	0
AM	53,8 %		18,0 %

Table 3.15: Nonhuman agents in NL and PL

To conclude the analysis of lexico-grammatical features, words with negative connotations are avoided in letters, but when they do occur, they are more frequent in NL. However, in general, letters are substantially positive. Analysis of thematic structures shows an increase in the number of inanimate nominal groups in NL, hence an increase in objectivity. The actions are not attributable to any person, nor to management. Verb tenses demonstrate higher incidence of past tense in NL, supporting the theory that companies with lower performance tend to explain more extensively their operation. An increase of passive constructions in NL, together with an increase in inanimate nominal groups, boosts the objectivity of NL. On top of that, objectivity of NL is further boosted by a significantly higher occurrence of nonhuman agents.

3.3.3   Rhetorical moves

Moving on from lexico-grammatical features, in this phase of genre analysis, Bhatia turns his attention to rhetorical move-structure of letters (*Critical* 100). Based on his research of letters, he identified seven rhetorical moves that typically appear in letters to shareholders. They are summarized in Table 3.16 below.

Rhetorical move-structure of letters	
Type of move	**Description**
Move 1: **Overview of the review period**	Often positive, occasionally cautious or negative mode
Move 2: **Major themes**	
Move 3: **Achievements-measures** **(elaboration & explanation of** **themes)**	Major achievements, evidence and detailing Major contributing factors (Inside the company for success or outside factors for failures) Major steps or measure taken to ensure success
Move 4: **Expectations and promises**	Detailed accounts of future actions Measure to be taken Intended & expected outcomes
Move 5:	Positive outlook

Looking forward	Continued challenges (sometimes) Grim outlook (rare)
Move 6: **Expressions of gratitude** **(optional)**	Appreciation to management team, sometimes workers Congratulations to management for successful period
Move 7: **Positive and confident closing**	Revisiting themes from Move 1 Summarizing forward looking positive statements

Table 3.16: General move-structure of letters according to Bhatia (*Critical* 100)

Following Bhatia's example, another step in the corpus analysis was to define rhetorical moves found in letters, determine whether they match Bhatia's moves and based on the results, make conclusions. For example, whether there are significant differences in rhetorical move-structures of NL and PL, whether these two groups of letters use the moves in the same sequence or differently, and what could be the writer's intentions behind keeping or changing the rhetorical move-structure patterns. As Devitt says, 'interpreting those textual patterns as purposeful can lead to insights about rhetorical strategies' (2).

However, after an attempt to apply Bhatia's general rhetorical move-structure (Table 3.16 above), I found that however clear and simple his moves and its descriptions look, applying this scheme proved to be inapplicable. There is a simple reason behind my statement. Bhatia's general rhetorical move-structure is defined too vaguely. Therefore, analysing the letters based on Bhatia's unclearly defined general move-structure would mainly rely on my intuition, and, as such, the results would not be supported by a reliable source.

Since letters are partly promotional in its function, it would also be noteworthy to analyse whether letters include rhetorical moves characteristic for the most typical genre belonging primarily to the promotional colony, that is advertisement. These moves are for example *targeting the market*, *establishing a niche*, *establishing credentials*, *celebrity or typical user endorsement* (*Worlds* 74). Without getting deep into looking for those moves in the corpus, it does not take much effort to identify some of these moves in the letters as exemplified in Table 3.17, just to provide a few. This

proves that the genre is equally present in promotional colony as well as reporting colony.

Examples of advertisement rhetorical moves in letters	
Move	**Example**
establishing credentials	*More than 1,000,000 business customers depend on CIT for the financing they need to run their companies.* (N4)
establishing a niche	*For more than 100 years, CIT has remained committed to the financing needs of small businesses and middle market companies—providing needed capital to sectors that other financial institutions often ignore.* (N4)
detailing the product or service	*We're also accelerating e-commerce and technology advances globally. We expanded Online Grocery shopping to new markets, ramped up in-store and in-club pickup, fully acquired the Chinese online retailer Yihaodian, and began to add new mobile services such as Walmart Pay.* (P10)

Table 3.17: *Examples* of rhetorical moves typical for advertisement found in letters

3.3.4   Metaphors

In *Discourse and Genre*, Stephen Bax utilises genre analysis to study political speeches. One of the aspects of political speeches he devotes to are metaphors, arguing that a 'metaphor, which is in essence the use of a word or expression from one domain in a new and unexpected domain in order to achieve particular effects, can […] be a potentially powerful feature of discourse' (Bax 170). Political speeches are comparable to letters because of their persuasive nature, therefore the following subchapter pays attention to metaphors found in letters.

Since this thesis already applies various approaches towards analysing texts, it would be beyond the scope of this diploma thesis to execute a rigorous and valid metaphor analysis of the corpus. Yet I believe that this topic deserves some attention. Several repeatedly occurring metaphors were detected while analysing the corpus. A lot of metaphors found in the letters coincide with conceptual metaphors established by Zoltán Kövecses in his book *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. His study is based on Lakoff and Johnson's conception of metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson).

Kövecses's metaphor LONG-TERM, PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES ARE JOURNEYS seems to be the most common one in the letters, both NL and PL (Kövecses 163). Next popular conceptual metaphors present in letters, or business writing as such, are PROGRESS IS MOTION FORWARD, A COMPANY IS A PERSON, SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE PLANTS, and A COMPANY IS A BUILDING (Kövecses 150,10, 136, 157). More generally, the last two metaphors could be described as *complex systems are buildings* or *plants* in which the plant or building is the complex system, parts of the plant or building are parts of the complex system and the biological growth of the plant or construction growth of the building is the abstract development of the complex system (Kövecses 136, 125). Examples of these frequent metaphors are illustrated in Table 3.18 below.

Conceptual metaphors in NL and PL	
Kövecses's metaphors	*Examples*
LONG-TERM, PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES ARE JOURNEYS (163)	*2009 was for us a critical **juncture** (N1)* *We reached a new **milestone** in asset size (N6)* *It has been a difficult **journey** to get to where we are today (N7)* *has successfully **navigated** difficult markets before (N9)* *we are proud of **how far we have come** (N9)* *creating hurricane force **headwinds** for our industry (N10)* *In the **upstream** we ranked No. 1 in earnings (P2)* *The Chevron Way provides a **roadmap** (P2)* *Among the many **milestones** we marked on the **road** (P3)* ***embarked** on a multi-year $1 billion investment program (P3)* *we do have a clear **path** (P3)* *we took significant **steps** (P4)* ***mapped** out our **journey** to restore (P7)* *making great **strides** in our mission to bring better health (P9)* *The **road** ahead will not always be easy (P10)*
PROGRESS IS MOTION FORWARD (150)	*One example is our **pioneering** citycenter online interactive community (N3)* *we continued to **outdistance** the competition (N8)*

	*excited about the opportunities **ahead** (N9)* *For Chevron 2014 was a year of **moving forward** our strong queue of projects (P2)*
SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE PLANTS (10)	*We believe our services **growth** will improve (N3)* *the next phase in the company's **evolution** (N7)* *EnronOnline will accelerate their **growth** (N8)* *Citi has returned to its **roots** (P3)* *our clients will **reap** savings of more than $700 million (P4)*
A COMPANY IS A BUILDING (136)	*our balance sheet as our **rocksolid foundation** (N1)* *a strong loan loss reserve **fortifies** our balance sheet (N6)* *we made progress on our four strategic **pillars** (N3)* *the **cornerstone** of our business. (N5)* *was the **key** to our success. (N9)* *we have **built** Express Scripts with a purpose (P4)* *this moment will **reinforce** HP's position (P7)*
A COMPANY IS A PERSON (157)	*these companies are the **backbone** of our economy (N4)* *we have **stretched ourselves** (N8)* *we are well positioned to be a **survivor** (N10)* *We almost doubled Speedway's marketing **footprint** (P8)*

Table 3.18: Conceptual metaphors in NL and PL

The boundaries between the metaphors are not completely clear, as in case of the *growth* metaphor which could be also included in the metaphor A COMPANY IS A PERSON. Also, some propositions combine several of these conceptual metaphors at the same time, for instance: *In October, we took another **foundational** [A COMPANY IS A BUILDING] **step** [PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES ARE JOURNEYS] by **partnering** with [A COMPANY IS A PERSON] American Capital Acquisition Corporation* (N1).

In addition to the conceptual metaphors above, PL and NL also employ a variation on PROGRESS IS A MOTION FORWARD metaphor, which could be modified to PROGRESS IS A MOTION UP. There were several examples of this variation in both, PL and NL, as shown in Table 3.19 below.

PROGRESS IS MOTION UP	*EnronOnline has enabled us to **scale** quickly* (N8)
	*enabled us to **scale** our business beyond our own expectations* (N8)
	*where we enjoy **scale*** (P3)
	*the expected **upward** trajectory* (P3)
	*we are now in a position to **scale new heights*** (P3)

Table 3.19: Examples of PROGRESS IS MOTION UP metaphor

Since metaphors are a powerful stylistic device that complements the force of the lexis 'by the strength of these striking interwoven metaphors, acting subliminally to reinforce the nexus of messages,' a thorough analysis of conceptual metaphors in letter to shareholders could be a of an interest to future researchers and it could bring some interesting findings (Bax 171). Also, a different methodological approach could be applied in a future study – to take two groups of letters of successful and unsuccessful companies, similarly to this diploma thesis, and based on the metaphors, demystify whether a success or failure affects the writer's metaphorical conception of language used in letters.

A useful approach could be to use *Metaphor Identification Procedure* (MIP) which 'uses a more valid and repeatable way of finding metaphors' and avoids using researcher's intuition (Pitcher 1). In this methodological approach, the researcher checks each word against a dictionary definition (Pitcher 3). However time-demanding this method is, it provides a reliable option for metaphor analysis and it would be worth applying MIP on letters to shareholders.

Metaphors can serve to create a connection between the writer's and the reader's opinions and values which can positively affect the reader's emotions and lead to successful audience persuasion. In particular, the metaphors used in NL and PL, can draw on the reader's belief that a solid base is essential for growth. In this sense, a metaphor becomes a rhetorical device or strategy intended to connect the author's and reader's values while inducing emotions. The intentional focus on reader's emotions will be further discussed in the next subchapter which is concerned with an analysis of the means of persuasion.

3.3.5 Classical modes of persuasion

Rhetorical modes of persuasion show how significant contextual features are implemented in the creation of texts. Principally, the writer must keep in mind the communicative purpose of the text. In particular, apart from focusing on its primary communicative purpose which in case of letters is to report, letters' focus is significantly directed to its other communicative purpose which is persuasion of the reader. To achieve this communicative goal, a writer needs to consider the participants, discursive space and other contextual features, which lead him or her to modify the text so that it suits its purpose, in other words, its communicative function.

Persuasion of the readers belongs to one of the ultimate effects that a successfully written letter should achieve. Typically, persuasion is the target function of political speeches and oratory and the strategies of persuasion have been studied since long time ago (Bax 164). Already in the 4th century BC, Aristotle came with a theory that offers three components used strategically to achieve persuasion in oratory (Rhetoric). The theory is nowadays referred to as the classical analysis. On account of its persuasive nature, a letter to shareholders makes a suitable candidate for a classical analysis.

Aristotle concentrates on three features of oratory – *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* – each contributing to the achievement of the listener's, or, in this case, the reader's persuasion (Aristotle). The description of each feature is summarized in Table 3.20 below. The table also exemplifies the ways writers use *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* for their benefit.

Ethos, pathos, logos	
ETHOS	*Ethos* impersonates the writer's persona in the text and as such 'concerns the way in which the speaker puts his or her own character across to the audience in order to create a strong and trustworthy impression' (Bax 165).
Ethos **in letters**	In political speeches, the speakers have a wide variety of resources: 'the way they stand, the way they respond, body language, gestures, intonation and pitch and the way they take questions' (Bax 165). These aspects, that the orators can work with, are deprived to a writer. So

	how is writer's ethos reflected in writing? The writer occupies the highest position in the company (being a Chairman, CEO, President of the company, and so on). The author uses professional business terminology. A very important factor that supports writer's *ethos* is shared socio-pragmatic space with audited accounting and financial report which lends the writer factual reliability and credibility.
PATHOS	*Pathos* aims at feelings of audiences and uses the feelings to get the audience on the speaker's, writer's in case of letters, side – Bax calls this process: 'putting the audience into a certain frame of mind,' and elaborates on this idea by giving examples: 'political speakers make use of emotional means, such as fanning up nationalistic feeling, or haters, or sympathy, perhaps by an anecdote, or perhaps by using emotive terms such as "terrorist" or "criminals" or victims' (165).
Pathos in letters	How do business experts appeal to hearer's emotions in letters? Pathos gets most powerful when the author shows approval of a value of reader and the strongest value that share all readers of annual reports is desire to gain money. Letters appeal to audience's imagination and hopes and that is why letters contain a large number of forward-looking statements, forecast of positive future results, and just generally expectation of a successful and profitable future.
Examples of *pathos* in letters	The author expresses the same goal or value with presumed audience (current or potential investors, shareholders) - *to return CIT to prosperity and restore the luster of its centuryold brand* (N4) Painting a scenario of positive future – appeals to the reader's imagination and hopes and counts on the reader's desire to earn money - *we maintain our staunch bias toward long-term gains and toward* **making AmTrust an enduring and highly profitable** *organization that serves every shareholder well* (N1) Drawing on reader's value 'hard work brings money' - *I vowed to work* **tirelessly***; I will work* **diligently** (N4)

LOGOS	*Logos* expresses 'persuasion through logic argumentation' and 'persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of arguments suitable to the case in question (Bax 166; Aristotle). Logos also enhances ethos by making the author look more knowledgeable.
Logos **in letters**	Letters are not based on logical argumentation. Most of the times, they do not present any concrete facts or figures. For example, facts in N4 that support the author's claims are vague and inaccurate: ***More than 1,000,000 business customers*** *depend on CIT;* ***For more than 100 years,*** *CIT has remained committed to the financing needs of small businesses and middle market companies* (N4). However, N4 supports its claims by quoting established institution: ***According to the Small Business Administration****, small businesses make up more than 99.7% of all employers and create 75% of net new U.S. jobs* (N4).

Table 3.20: Classical means of persuasion

Analysing *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* brings a new perspective on business communication. It would be useful to develop an analytic framework applicable to all sort of business texts, not excluding letters. Hyland (1998) argues that a letter, 'as a signed personal letter, […] has enormous rhetorical importance in building credibility and imparting confidence, convincing investors that the company is pursuing sound and effective strategies' (224).

Other parts of ARs make use of mainly *logos* and *ethos*. There is no place for *pathos* such as in MD&A or financial statements that mainly rely on argumentation and provide their statements with proof in form of accounting numbers, and also rely on having the accounting information audited by certificated accountants who are highly credible. Therefore, letters are the only discursive space in ARs that can exploit *pathos* for the achievement of persuasion.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* provides an interesting perception upon creation of texts. In the future, it would be interesting to provide a more rigorous analysis of *ethos, pathos,* and *logos* in letters.

4 Conclusion

The present master's thesis concentrated on investigating a genre *corporate annual report*, specifically its subgenre *letter to shareholders*, by means of newly proposed conception of genre analysis: Critical Genre Analysis. CGA aims at putting genres into context and, apart from describing genres, it seeks for explanations. The thesis here paid attention to relation between linguistic choices employed by authors of letters and success or failure of their companies.

Theoretical base and specialist literature that created foundation for this thesis was introduced in chapter *2 Definition of genre*. A description of genre analysis was followed by clarification of Bhatia's CGA. Also, the chapter presented in greater detail the genre corporate annual reports and provided its broad contextual description.

Chapter *3 Practical part* moved to analysing the corpus of letters. The first section focused on contextual features and determined two communicative purposes that letters serve – to report and to promote. Though promotion in letters is considered to be its secondary communicative goal, as reporting genres are colonized by promotional ones, it is unmistakeably a decisive factor for determination of linguistic choices. Only the title letter to shareholders suggests the promotional nature of the genre as the title contains targeted recipients of letters – shareholders. Shareholders are members of a business community which is driven by the desire to earn money and as such it is inevitably connected to promotion.

The next phase of analysis progressed to text-internal features of letters and showed that NL contain a higher number of words with negative connotation. However, the number was still strikingly low when contrasted to the overall positive nature of letters. No matter the performance of the company, Pollyanna principle conquers the letters.

NL showed an increase in objectivity when looking at several lexico-grammatical features. Firstly, in terms of thematic structures, NL contain considerably more inanimate nominal groups and outside factors that influence the company's performance. Secondly, NL present a higher incidence of passive constructions and lastly, increase in non-human agents. These results indicate that, compared to PL, writers of NL tend to distance themselves, and the management, from the message.

However, the analysis of process verbs did not support the expectation that NL present the information more objectively. Relational verbs, like *be* or *have*, add

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to objectivity of letters and hence it was expected that the number material verbs in letters would decrease together with decline in profitability. The results showed the opposite tendency though. As business writers favour material verbs, the lower percentage of relational verbs in NL, therefore, could be only a strategic facade that is supposed to obscure the negative information. Readability levels of NL and PL also disproved the anticipated results that NL would be more demanding on readers. The readability level resulted to be almost identical in NL and PL. Based on these results, performance of a company does not have an effect on the level of readability of letters to shareholders.

In conclusion, the results of the lexico-grammatical features of letters predominantly meet the wording of Hypothesis 1 which presupposes that objectivity of letters coincides with decrease in profitability. Some tests did not meet the expectations though.

Moving on from the lexico-grammatical features of letters, the analysis turned its attention to rhetorical move-structures. Based on his research, Bhatia (2017) provides a useful framework of rhetorical moves typically used in letters. However, the framework needs to be defined in greater detail and since analysing letters based on his framework would mainly rely on my intuition, the results would not be supported by a reliable source. A clear-cut rhetorical move-structure of letters to shareholders could be of an interest to future researchers. Also, it could be of an interest to linguists to detect an advertisement move-structure in letters. Letters partly belong to promotional colony and as it was briefly outlined in the analysis, it was proved that we can find in them also moves of promotional genres such as advertisements. As such, letters employ features of both, reporting and promotional genres at the same time. The findings could support the Hypothesis 3 which proposes that that letters to shareholders equally employ linguistic and extra-linguistic features of both promotional and reporting genres.

The next step in the analysis was to explore metaphors in the letters. The most frequent conceptual metaphors found were LONG-TERM, PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES ARE JOURNEYS, A COMPANY IS A COMPLEX SYSTEM (a plant, building, or person), and PROGRESS IS A MOTION FORWARD. These metaphors draw on the reader's belief that the company depicts appropriate destination for its journey, that the company has a solid base which is essential for growth, and that

the company is not stagnant, it is moving forward towards being better and more profitable. Use of such metaphors could be viewed as a strategy aiming to connect the author's with reader's values and influencing reader's emotions. Future research of metaphors in letters to shareholders could investigate whether operation performance of a company has any effect on metaphorical conceptions in the letters.

Lastly, the thesis explored classical means of persuasion. The author decided to include them in the study because, as letters belong to promotional genres, they aim, among other things, at reader's persuasion. Letters strive to persuade the shareholders to keep or start investing in the company. The thesis presented a rough draft of how ethos, pathos and logos work within letters to shareholders which could bring linguistic attention for future research.

Authors of letters draw on tested rhetorical-move structures, conceptual metaphors that intent to connect author's and reader's conceptions of business and means of persuasion that target at reader's desire to invest. Doing so, letters prove to be highly persuasive and comply with Hypothesis 2 which says that persuasion, while not being a primary goal of letters, is an indispensable feature of letters.

All in all, as Bhatia suggests, the thesis offered multiple approaches towards grasping genre analysis. In *Critical Genre Analysis* (2017), Bhatia presents a useful outline but does not provide any concrete solutions for issues such as how to select adequate analysis approaches for specific genres or how to process the data found in the them. Therefore, it was highly demanding on the analyst to compile particular steps of the analysis and while the thesis followed Bhatia's suggestions on how to proceed in CGA, it was difficult to follow the rough sketch. For instance, Bhatia notes that he studied some features of lexis and grammar, or that there was a high incidence of the present perfect tense in the letters. Nevertheless, he does not give concrete numbers or does not provide the applied method of analysis.

Future linguistic investigations of letters to shareholders by means of Critical Genre Analysis could explore reactions by media experts in business and corporate affairs which could be useful when it comes to explanations of why professional writers use the language the way they do (*Critical* 107). It could also be of an interest to linguists to include employee's reactions as an additional point of view on the information in found letters.

Resumé

Tato magisterská práce si klade za cíl zkoumat výroční zprávy pomocí kritické žánrové analýzy. Kritická žánrová analýza, kterou v roce 2017 navrhl lingvista Vijay K. Bhatia, představuje nové, rozšířené pojetí tradiční žánrové analýzy. Svou novou koncepci zpracoval Bhatia v publikaci *Critical Genre Analysis: Investigating interdiscursive performace in professional practice*, 2017 (Kritická žánrová analýza: zkoumání interdiskurzivity v odborné praxi). Kritická žánrová analýza rozšiřuje základní rámec žánrové analýzy a dává větší důraz na intertextualitu, interdiskurzivitu a socio-pragmatický kontext, čímž kromě obsáhlé charakteristiky žánrů, vysvětluje a vyjasňuje použitý diskurz a odbornou praxi.

Výroční zpráva představuje rozsáhlý dokument, který podává informaci o výkonu společnosti za proběhlý fiskální rok. Výroční zprávy zpravidla obsahují čtyři rozdílné druhy diskurzu: účetní diskurz, finanční diskurz, diskurz pro vztahy s veřejností a právní doložku (*Critical* 91). Tato práce se především zaměřuje na diskurz pro vztahy s veřejností, který je ve výroční zprávě představen v podobě *dopisu akcionářům*.

Korpus této práce obsahuje dvacet dopisů akcionářům a je rozdělen na dvě kontrastní poloviny – dopisy společností, které měly úspěšný rok a dopisy společností, které dospěly k bankrotu. Práce se tedy pomocí množství testů snaží odhalit rozdíly v použití lingvistických prvků v těchto dvou kontrastních korpusech dopisů pro akcionáře. V neposlední řadě se práce snaží odhalit jakým způsobem autoři vybraných dopisů zneužívají flexibilitu tohoto žánru ve svůj prospěch.

Kapitola 1 uvádí tři hypotézy této práce. Hypotéza 1 vychází ze studie Thomas Jane (1997), která uvádí, že zvýšená objektivita dopisů se shoduje se sníženou profitabilitou společností (Thomas 47). Ačkoliv se nejedná o primární cíl dopisů, Hypotéza 2 předpokládá, že jedním z jejich důležitých účelů je přesvědčit čtenáře ve svůj prospěch. Hypotéza 3 říká, že dopisy akcionářům obsahují znaky obou žánrových kolonií, do kterých lze výroční zprávy zařadit, tj. propagační kolonie (promotional colony) a kolonie zpravodajská (reporting colony).

Druhá kapitola slouží jako teoretický podklad pro praktickou analýzu v kapitole třetí. Kapitola nejprve definuje termín *žánr* jako takový a poté důsledně popisuje žánr výročních zpráv. Tento popis se zaměřuje na definici výročních zpráv, proces jejich vzniku, vnější vlivy ovlivňující jejich obsahovou stránku (jako je legislativa), obsah samotný a také jejich formální vlastnosti. Dále je také uvedeno, co zapříčinilo

lingvistický zájem o tento žánr. Bhatiu zaujala především kauza z roku 2001, ve kterém jedna z nejvýdělečnějších americký firem té doby, Enron Corporation, vyhlásila bankrot poté, co vydala výroční zprávu bez jakýchkoliv indikací, že by firma směřovala k úpadku. Druhá kapitola poté popisuje tři tradiční přístupy k žánrové analýze, jakým způsobem se žánry hibridizují, kroky, které by měla žánrová analýza obsahovat a posun od žánrové analýzy ke kritické žánrové analýze.

Kapitola třetí se přesunuje k samotné analýze textů. První fáze analýzy se zaměřuje na kontextuální znaky dopisů a určuje dva komunikační účely, kterým dopisy slouží – podat zprávu o výkonu firmy a propagovat firmu. Ačkoliv se propagace firmy považuje pouze za druhotný komunikační účel, bezpochyby se jedná o rozhodující faktor při psaní dopisů. Zároveň název tohoto podžánru naznačuje jeho propagační povahu. Název obsahuje příjemce, na které se dopisy zaměřují, tj. akcionáře. Akcionáři jsou členy obchodní komunity, která je hnána touhou zisku, který je nevyhnutelně propojen i s propagováním.

Další fáze analýzy se posunuje k lexiko-gramatickým znakům dopisů. Ta poukazuje na fakt, že dopisy zkrachovalých společností obsahují více slov s negativní konotací. Zároveň ale číslo negativních slov je tak nízké v obou korpusech, že je zřejmé, že se společnosti snaží ukázat v co nejlepším světle bez ohledu na jejich výkon. Dopisy zkrachovalých firem dále ukazují, že se z části shodují s Hypotézou 1, tedy že objektivita dopisů roste se snižující se profitabilitou. Tematické struktury v dopisech zkrachovalých firem obsahují mnohem více neživých nominálních skupin (inanimate nominal gropus), vnějších faktorů, které ovlivnily chod společnosti, slovesných uskupení v pasivu a nelidských sémantických agentů. Tyto výsledky indikují, že autoři dopisů zkrachovalých firem se snaží oprostit sebe a vedení firmy od informací v dopise častěji než autoři dopisů úspěšných firem. Nicméně, analýza procesních a materiálních sloves (Halliday 2004) se neshoduje s tímto očekáváním.

Další fáze analýzy se zabývá rétorickými kroky, které dopisy dodržují. Bhatia (2017) poskytuje užitečný souhrn kroků, které dopisy typicky obsahují. Nicméně, jeho kroky nejsou jasně specifikovány a jako takové nebyly pro vykonání analýzy. Co se týče rétorické skladby dopisů akcionářům, tato problematika nabízí prostor pro budoucí výzkum. Jelikož se dopisy řadí také mezi propagační žánry, rovněž by bylo zajímavé nacházet v dopisech rétorickou skladbu, která je typická pro propagační inzeráty. Následujícím krokem v analýze bylo prozkoumat metafory, které se v dopisech vyskytují. Nejčastějšími metafory jsou: *dlouhodobé, účelné činnosti jsou cesty*,

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společnost je komplexní systém, a *pokrok je pohyb dopředu* (Kövecses 2010). Rozsah diplomové práce neumožnil vytvořit pečlivou analýzu metafor v dopisech, nicméně by bylo lingvisticky zajímavé prozkoumat, jestli výkon společnosti má nějaký efekt na metaforické pojetí dopisů akcionářům. Na závěr se analýza dopisů zabývá klasickými módy přesvědčování *ethos*, *pathos* a *logos* a také usuzuje, že tento přístup ke zkoumání dopisů akcionářům, a dalších obchodních žánrů, je málo probádaný a vybízí k podrobnějšímu budoucímu výzkumu. Rétorické kroky, metafory a módy přesvědčování, které dopisy z korpusu práce obsahují potvrzují Hypotézu 2, která říká, že jedním z důležitých účelů dopisů je přesvědčit jejich čtenáře ve svůj prospěch. Dále rétorické kroky také potvrzují Hypotézu 3, která říká, že dopisy obsahují znaky jak propagační, tak zpravodajské kolonie.

Kritická žánrová analýza představuje nový přístup k žánrové analýze, který se snaží zkoumat lingvistické poznatky v textech v souvislostech s odbornou praxí a celkovým kontextem žánru. Zabývá se reálnými texty a snaží se popisovat a vysvětlovat z jakých důvodů autoři používají jazyk, tak jak jej používají. Nicméně, rámec kritické žánrové analýzy, tak jak jej představuje Bhatia (2017), vyžaduje vypracování podrobnějšího rámcového postupu a metodologie zpracování analýz.

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Appendices

Words with negative connotations			
accident	delays	inadequate	sluggish
adverse	depressed	lack	suffered
adversely	deterioration	lose	tough
bad	difficult	losing	troubled
bankruptcy	difficulties	loss	unable
concern	disappointed	losses	unfavourable
concerned	disappointing	lost	unfortunately
concerns	disappointment	missed	unprofitable
crash	downturn	negative	unrealized
crisis	downturns	negatively	weak
deficit	failed	poor	weakened
deficits	failure	problem	weaker
delay	hazardous	problems	weakness
delayed	inability	shortage	worst

Appendix 1: Words with negative connotations
(Abrahamson and Amir 1179)