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## THE COVER LETTER AS A GENRE OF SPEECH IN TEACHING POLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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**Abstract.** Genres are products of cultures, reflecting the needs and practices of communities that have created them. Teaching the Polish language to foreigners, we should make them familiar with numerous Polish genres of speech, recommended in programmes of teaching Polish as a foreign language. The cover letter is a relatively new genre in the Polish continuum of speech, adopted from the Anglo-Saxon culture after the transition in 1989. It is a complex genre, deriving from others, such as the official letter, application, advertisement letter, and CV. The article presents a description of the genre, according to the genre pattern by Maria Wojtak, including four aspects: structural, pragmatic, ontological and linguistic. The dynamics of the genre resulted in the creation of a canon model, alternative variants and adaptive variants of this type of letter. The definition of the cover letter in terms of genre studies states that it is a short text (maximum one page) with a strictly defined structure, aiming at making the recipient (potential employer) hire the sender, it shows the sphere of life related to the world of labour and education, and is usually expressed in a schematic and clichéd manner (usage patterns are often copies of normative patterns). Foreigners should learn all four aspects of description of this genre of speech for effective communication in the environment of the Polish language and culture.

Genres are products of particular cultures and express their needs, interests, experiences and practices. A genre of speech, as defined by Stanisław Gajda, is “a manner of linguistic communication, shaped culturally and historically and included in the social conventions; a pattern of text organization” (Gajda 2001, p. 255). Maria Wojtak perceives a genre as “an abstract model/pattern having various specific realizations in the form of utterances, as well as a set of conventions that tell members of a particular communicative community what shape should be given to specific interactions” (Wojtak 2004, p. 16). A description of the genre

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pattern proposed by the Lublin researcher includes four aspects: structural, pragmatic, ontological and stylistic (Wojtak 1999, 2004). They all intermingle and influence one another. The structural aspect refers to the architectonics of an utterance and the interrelations between its elements. It describes the composition of the text, its textual frame, a division into segments and their mutual connections. The pragmatic aspect expresses the communication entanglements, i.e. the image of the sender and the recipient, as well as the relations among the interlocutors, specifies the intentions of an utterance, and usually decides about the identity of the genre. It also characterizes the life context of the genre. The ontological aspect presents themes, the point of view, the worldview encoded in the language of the genre, and the axiological system of the language community that has created a given genre. And, finally, the stylistic aspect refers to the linguistic exponents typical of genre utterances, i.e. the language means, conditioned structurally and defined pragmatically (Wojtak 2004, pp. 16–17). Each aspect exposes a certain scale of paradoxes, e.g. schematic – original, monointentional – multiintentional, spoken – written etc.

As noticed already by Mikhail Bakhtin (Bachtin 1986), genres are dynamic and changeable, as dynamic as our life is. Certain genres disappear (e.g. the life history, the application – *podanie*), others appear and/or replace the previous ones (e.g. CV, the cover letter). Almost all genres undergo evolution as a reflection of changes in society. Therefore, one can distinguish different variants of each genre. Maria Wojtak mentions three types of variants for each genre:

1. the canon variant – the basic form of genre realization, deciding about the identity of the genre and including fixed structural, pragmatic and stylistic determinants;
2. alternative variants – transformations of the canon variant, including modified elements;
3. adaptive variants – variants including elements of other genres.

The above variants operate in the life space of the genre, which is also dynamic and changeable. All of them together create the so-called field of genological references, where the canon variant takes the central position, alternative variants are close to the centre and adaptive patterns are located on the periphery of the field (Balbus 2000, pp. 19–32).

While teaching Polish as a foreign language we have to make students familiar with numerous Polish genres of speech. *Programy nauczania języka polskiego jako obcego. Poziomy A1–C2* recommend the introduction of particular genres at different levels<sup>1</sup>. At the B2 Vantage level, a foreigner should acquire the ability to write a cover letter<sup>2</sup> (Janowska et al. 2016, p. 129). A definition of this genre

<sup>1</sup> Numerous examples provided in the article come from textbooks for teaching Polish as a foreign language, which confirms the need to teach the genre to foreigners learning Polish.

<sup>2</sup> Other names used for the genre in English include: a covering letter, a letter of application, a motivational letter, a motivation letter, a personal statement, a job application.

(*list motywacyjny*) in *Praktyczny słownik współczesnej polszczyzny* edited by H. Zgólkowa reads as follows: a letter justifying a certain proposal, especially an application of a candidate to take a certain position, a job in a certain profession (Zgólkowa 1994–2005, p. 223). In the Polish genre space it is close to the application and includes, beside a request for employment, elements of an interesting self-presentation. It explains the author's motivation to receive the desired position and, along with a CV, is required by employers for the recruitment process. The cover letter is, thus, a short piece of writing<sup>3</sup> all about the applicant, his education, professional experience, skills and abilities, ambitions, personality, and interests. The very name of the cover letter implies that it is a type of a letter in its official variation<sup>4</sup>. All letters are a type of correspondence, include a certain relationship between a sender and a recipient, and have some practical aims (Skwarczyńska 1937, p. 39). The main intention is to express a request, words of thanks, or a willingness to keep in touch. The cover letter “often provides the first direct contact between a candidate and an employer” (Tullis, Trappe 2000, p. 22).

It is presumed that the cover letter, along with the CV, of persons employed based on a job contract came into life only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it started its career in the USA in the 1930s. “Google Ngram, an algorithm that searches the texts of Google Books, traces the rise of “cover letter” to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The U.S. was transitioning away from manufacturing toward a service-sector economy. The percentage of white-collar jobs in the economy nearly doubled.” (Lurie 2013).

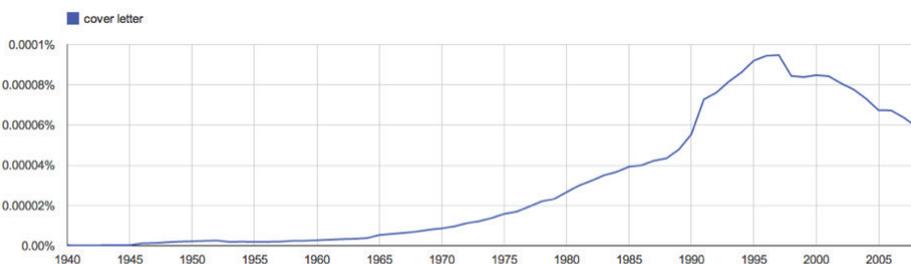


Figure 1. by Lurie 2013

Much like today's cover letters, the original intent was to provide additional information to the prospective employer that was not included in the applicant's CV. “In 1958, the near simultaneous occurrence of the “cover letter” term in the four major newspapers – NYT, WSJ, Chicago Tribune and LA Times – suggests it was catching on” (Lurie 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Ewa Grzesiak suggests that it should not be longer than one page (see: Grzesiak 1998, p. 102), compare also handbooks, e.g. Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> More about a letter as a genre in Kałkowska 1982; see also handbooks, e.g. Wolska 1967; Wolska, Spirydowicz 1974.

In Poland, the cover letter has replaced the traditional application (*podanie*), and is perceived as explanation of what is included in a concise form in the CV. It appeared in the Polish genological space and the real world in the 1990s due to dynamic extra-linguistic changes, i.e. political, economic, social and cultural (Ożóg 2001). New companies in Poland, both foreign and domestic, followed the recruitment procedures and thus the documentation typical of the well-developed West-European and American organizations and traditions. Therefore, the structure, intentions, ontology and style are adapted from foreign texts, along with the emerging needs. The new genre is complex and related to the application (*podanie*), the advertisement letter, and the official letter (Wolny 1998). It is highly persuasive, fulfils the function of the application, advertises the sender and formally has the form of a letter. The increasing number of foreigners studying Polish and pursuing their professional careers in Poland should be prepared to write cover letters while applying for jobs here.

The structural aspect of the cover letter is strict and precisely defined (Krauz 2001). It is usually composed of the following elements, some of them being mandatory, the others optional<sup>5</sup>:

#### **I. Heading:**

- a) **personal data (candidate's name and contact details),**
- b) **place and date of sending the letter,**
- c) **the name of the company / director of the company one is applying to and his/its address;**

#### **II. Introduction:**

- a) **salutation (Dear Sir/Madam),**
- b) introduction of the applicant,
- c) reason for writing the cover letter;

#### **III. The body of the text – justification of one's application:**

- a) **expression of one's willingness to take the job,**
- b) showing interest and suitability for the job,
- c) **presentation of one's competences and skills:**
  - i. **hard skills,**
  - ii. **soft/social skills;**

#### **IV. The ending:**

- a) summary of the previous information,
- b) **offer to meet,**
- c) farewell phrase,
- d) **signature.**

The textual frame starts with the heading and salutation, and ends with a signature. In Polish letters the heading has a particular layout typical of administrative communication. In the upper left-hand corner of the page the candidate

<sup>5</sup> Mandatory elements are marked in bold.

should include his name and surname, the address and other contact details (phone number and e-mail address), whereas in the upper right-hand corner there should be the name of the place and date of writing the letter. Below the date one should provide the name of the addressee (director or name of the company) and their address. The following example might illustrate this segment:

Andrzej Kowalski  
Ul. Marszałkowska 15  
00-345 Warszawa  
Phone: 999-33-00

Warszawa, 26.04.2011

Redakcja „Gazety Wyborczej”  
Ul. Miernicza 36  
00-990 Warszawa

(Kuziak, Rzepczyński 2003, p. 84)

The introduction includes a salutation and presentation of the matter about which one applies: an introduction of the candidate as a person for a given position and the reason for writing the cover letter. One should observe all the conventions of politeness and professionalism (Marcjanik 2001). The addressing phrases include such forms as e.g. *Szanowny Panie Dyrektorze / Szanowna Pani Dyrektor* (Dear Mr./Ms. Director), *Szanowny Panie / Szanowna Pani* (Dear Sir/Madam), *Wielce Czcigodny Panie Profesorze / Wielce Czcigodna Pani Profesor* (Venerable Professor), *Szanowni Państwo* (Dear Sirs; Dear Sir/Madam). Mentioning the name of the recipient implies an attempt to make a closer contact between the interlocutors, contributing to more direct communication (Krauz 2001, pp. 131–132). Handbooks suggest that if the sender does not know which individual is the addressee of the letter, he should call the company and ask for the name of the recruiting person (Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 15).

As an introduction, the applicant may mention his title to apply for the job in question saying e.g. *I am a graduate from the Post-Secondary School for Office Staff, teaching secretaries, assistants and office workers*. (Lipińska, Dąbmska 2016, p. 125); *I have 8 years' experience selling medical supplies in hospitals* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 35); *Having obtained a Bachelor's Degree from Uniwersytet Jagielloński in May, I am presently seeking interviews with firms that are recruiting recent graduates who demonstrate strong potential to become valued members of their legal staff* (Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 42). It is advisable to mention the reason for writing the letter. It might be a reply to a job offer found in a newspaper or on the company website, or simply an expression of interest in the type of work available at a given institution. The following expressions might be examples: *In reply to your offer I would like to submit my candidacy for the*

*position of journalist at your newspaper; In reply to the job offer you placed yesterday in "Gazeta Wyborcza", I have filed my application and CV at the School Secretary's Office (Madeja, Morcinek 2007, p. 83); I enclose my curriculum vitae in response to your advertisement in "Gazeta Wyborcza" dated 11.10.1998 for an Economic Data Analyst in your company (Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 42). References to online offers might have the following reading: In reply to an advertisement placed on the Internet on the website pracuj.pl I wish to propose my candidacy for the position of teacher of Polish as a foreign language (Lipińska, Dąbska 2016, p. 129).*

An alternative reference to a job advertisement may be much shorter as shown below: *I am eager to introduce myself as a potential employee of Gloria Assante (Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 41); I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I have spent the last twelve years preparing to speak to you (Szydłowski 1999, p. 37).* All the above phrases expressly explain the candidate's right to contact the addressee in relation to a specific matter. Another interesting variant of this segment might be the following example:

I am a Portuguese living in Poland for a few years. I teach Portuguese in the language school "Columbus" and promote an innovative method "Teaching through playing". I recently read an advertisement that the Institute for Foreigners is seeking teachers and I would like to report my candidacy (Lipińska, Dąbska 2016, pp. 127–128).

In the most important segment of the cover letter, namely in the body, it is important to express one's willingness to take the offered job. It might be combined with a request for employment in a given position, e.g. *I am asking for employment during the holidays in the editorial office as a photojournalist (Cieślak, Cieślak 2005, p. 31).* Another example is formulated as follows: *I wish to work at your Institute as a teacher of the Polish language. (Lipińska, Dąbska 2016, p. 128).* Alternatives can read: *I am deeply interested in taking a job at the company POLEXPORT in the position of secretary. (Lipińska, Dąbska 2016, p. 125) or I wish to be considered for full-time employment with your company (Szydłowski 1999, p. 41).*

Next, a candidate should write about his education, skills, strengths, achievements, and awards in a way that makes him a perfect candidate for the job. In addition, one usually shows one's character traits that will contribute to the effective fulfillment of duties in a given position. Candidates refer to the qualities required or sought-after for a given job. Below is a list of different illustrations of this element from textbooks of Polish for foreigners:

I know English and German well, I can operate a computer in the scope of editing programs, graphics and databases. I am independent and hard-working, I can make good contacts with people. I do not have any family responsibilities that might limit my availability. (Lipińska, Dąbska, 2016, pp. 125–125).

I am fluent in English, intermediate in Polish and I know a little Spanish. My method [of teaching] assumes a direct contact with the language, so it consists of the arrangement

of meetings of foreigners with Poles in different places: restaurants, cafes, bars and pubs, since there is nothing better than natural conversations in a free atmosphere. (Lipińska, Dąbska 2016, pp. 127–128).

I am Belgian, I speak German fluently, I also know French and a little English. I learnt Polish at the University of Lueven for two semesters and for one semester at your Institute. I think I would be a good teacher, since I understand problems of people learning this beautiful yet difficult language. ... I will do my best to make lessons funny and pleasant. I am a cheerful, kind and optimistic person. ... (Lipińska, Dąbska 2016, p. 128).

I am Austrian, but I possess the required competences – last year I completed studies at the Polish Institute of Warsaw University, and this year a teaching course for teachers in Wrocław. I have some teaching experience – I worked for two years as a teacher of German at the Secondary School No. XI in Kielce. In addition – as a foreigner – I understand the problems and needs of people learning Polish as a foreign language. I am a responsible, creative, ambitious person, I like working with people, I am open to new solutions. I am interested in the history of art and folk music, but my passion is teaching foreign languages. I am fluent in German and Polish, I have a command of English and Hungarian on the C1 level, and Russian on the B2 level. Now I am learning Spanish. (Lipińska, Dąbska 2016, p. 129).

I am conscientious, can cooperate with a team, and have a conflict-free and sociable character. My additional advantage is my perfect orientation in the city and the fact that I can cycle well. (Kuziak, Rzepczyński 2012, p. 84).

I am a student of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class at the Secondary School in Gdańsk. I have taken part in photography classes for a few years, organized by the Youth Home in Gdańsk. In 2002, I won the title of “Photo Master” in the youth category up to 20 years of age and the 1<sup>st</sup> place in a city competition entitled “The Most Beautiful Places of Gdańsk”. I am a conscientious person, I can work with a team of people. Since Gdańsk is my family city I know all its corners perfectly. (Cieślak, Cieślak 2005, p. 31).

Another example of a motivational fragment is provided in the letter of a candidate for the position of university professor: *I meet all the requirements for a person occupying this position. At the same time I inform you that I have outstanding scientific achievements – widely recognized in Poland and abroad, and rich teaching experience.* (Kuziak, Rzepczyński 2012, p. 100); *With a consistent track record of success within the plastics and special chemical industries, I believe that I could contribute immediately to a variety of business development situations* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 45); *I believe I have a great deal to contribute to the department, given my experience and interests, as well as my sense of humor and creative energy* (Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 41).

Mentioning the benefits the company receives by hiring the candidate will strengthen his chances of employment. In the final part of the justification why the author should be selected, a candidate underlines his confidence, proficiency and interest in the employer. A good example is: *“I would love to find out more about the X department/company and how could I help as fast as possible”* (<https://novoresume.com/career-blog/how-to-write-a-motivation-letter>). It is important to show passion, ambition, and a hard-working attitude in an implicit way. Thus, the body of the cover letter is the most original and creative part of each utterance.

The ending may sum up the suitability of the candidate for the given job and shows his readiness to meet the recruiter. An example of both may read as follows:

I anticipate discussing your needs with you and how my background would benefit them. To that end, I will call you during the week of April 12<sup>th</sup>; in the meantime, should you need additional information about my experience and skills beyond what my enclosed résumé outlines, please call me on 052/33-45-56 (Szydłowski 1999, p. 43).

Some other examples may read: *I look forward to meeting you soon* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 37); *I would be most anxious to discuss my career goals with you – even if on a purely explanatory basis. If you have any immediate questions, do not hesitate to call* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 45); *I would appreciate a personal interview with you to discuss my application further* (Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 41).

The final elements of the cover letter are: an official farewell phrase, e.g. *Z poważaniem / Z wyrazami szacunku* (*Sincerely / Yours sincerely / Yours faithfully*) and the applicant's full signature. The final phrase constitutes the closing delimitation of the textual frame.

In conclusion, in terms of the genre structure, the canon variant should include the heading, a salutation, expression of one's willingness to join the team, justification of one's application (a presentation of one's hard and soft skills) and a signature. Alternative variants are usually longer and include the facultative elements, e.g. references to advertisements by the company, elements of one's CV, presentation of one's interest in learning more about the employer or showing readiness to attend a meeting. All cover letters appear to be adaptive variants, taking the shape of a formal letter. It is worth mentioning that a cover letter implicitly or explicitly refers to other documents certifying the candidate's education, professional experience, certain skills, publications, diplomas, references, and awards. Such intertextuality strengthens the truthfulness of the self-presentation and confirms the applicant's suitability for a given job.

The pragmatic aspect includes the main illocution which is the convincing of the reader that the author is a perfect candidate for the offered vacancy, e.g. *Because my background fits perfectly with the position your advertisement describes, I look forward to being considered for it* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 43); *Both my education and professional experience are conformable with requirements presented in your offer* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 36). Sometimes the applicant claims to be able to solve the prospective employer's problem, e.g. *As a Master of criminal law with a specialty in data analysis, I might make full use of my knowledge, which in connection with my experience in planning, organization and conducting certain types of research, will significantly contribute to an improvement of results achieved by your specialists* (Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 38). Other subsidiary illocutions may appear in certain variants, including a request for benefits. Handbooks advise against providing information about previous salaries or expected remuneration. Yet such elements can be found in cover letters, e.g. *My remuneration together with*

*bonuses in the last two years amounted to PLN 2000 a month* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 46), as employers may ask for such proposals. The position of the recipient of the message is superior to the position of the sender. Communication is rendered in writing, and there is an interval between the moment of sending and the moment of receiving the text. There are official relationships between the interlocutors; they do not know each other. Sometimes, applicants are not familiar with the name of the person who will read their letter. As Maria Krauz claims, addressing a cover letter to a particular person creates a closer contact, reduces the distance and facilitates the dialogue between the sender and the recipient (Krauz 2001, p. 131).

The cover letter belongs to the type of administrative communication between an individual and an institution (Malinowska 2001). The pattern requires fixed rules and does not leave much space for creativity, yet the main part, which is the most individual, may include original elements that will draw the attention of the recipient as they look for employees offering something different from the other candidates (Krauz 2001, p. 132). Here are three examples of a certain originality: *I'm not writing to you to set up a job interview. ... I am hoping that you might meet with me for a few minutes or so to give me some assistance with my job search* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 39); *My children are now grown, and I finally have the opportunity to put my expertise to work for you!* (Szydłowski 1999, p. 37); *I am very excited about the position* (Kering, Głogowski 2000, p. 41).

The ontological aspect includes the image of the world presented in texts, which refers to the professional sphere of life. It is related to types of work (companies, positions, professions, responsibilities, duties, experience), different spheres of economy and social life (industries, educational establishments, institutions, organizations), a system of education (schools, universities, courses, training, scientific degrees/titles, diplomas), skills and achievements (hard skills) required for the position (professional skills, experience, scientific degrees/titles, projects that have been implemented, responsibilities in previous jobs, successes, awards, licenses, participation in competitions, projects, training sessions, workshops), as well as character traits (social skills) valued in the labour world (conscientiousness, punctuality, responsibility, ambition, loyalty, integrity, ability to work with others, availability, flexibility, willingness and ability to learn new things and solutions). In alternative variants one might find elements of the applicant's family story, their interests and plans for the future.

The cover letter also shows the assets/values recognized by society on the labour market. Work itself is a great value for both parties of the communication process. One can find information about the education required for particular jobs and character traits highly valued in society. Candidates mention all the schools they attended, types of training, internships, description of responsibilities in previous jobs. The specialist abilities, knowledge, and professional competences that can be learnt in class or acquired at work are called hard skills. Success

and achievements are admired in society, therefore mentioning them supports the application and strengthens a candidate's chances. They include winning competitions, gaining awards for outstanding achievements, successful projects and works. They can be verified by the prospective employer on the basis of documentation, in an interview, or through tests and tasks. Character traits required for many positions include punctuality, reliability, ambition, hard work, engagement, availability, experience, friendliness, loyalty, conscientiousness, creativity, openness to new ideas, intelligence. They refer to the system of ethics that shows through and relates to universal values, including hard work, responsibility, ambition, conscientiousness, honesty, loyalty, cheerfulness, kindness, passion, optimism, effectiveness, friendliness, creativity, avoiding conflicts, understanding other people, cooperativeness, interest in the subject-matter of the job, good contact with people. In psychological terms, they are called soft or social skills, and are more difficult to measure. Yet the candidates being aware that such abilities can work for their advantage may mention that e.g. *they do not have problems making decisions, even under stress, can work under duress, remain calm in a crisis*. The role of social skills started to grow in the 1980s and is becoming more and more important these days (Deming 2017, p. 1).

In the stylistic aspect the cover letter is neat, elegant, and correct in terms of language. It should follow the structural pattern, be official and matter-of-fact, obey the linguistic politeness in addresses, salutations, vocabulary, farewell phrases, etc. The utterances often contain clichés and are modelled according to the normative patterns. They include typical lexis and template polite expressions, e.g. the salutation forms and the ending, but also the typical cohesion expressions like: *w odpowiedzi na Państwa ofertę (in reply to your offer)*; *w odpowiedzi na ofertę pracy zamieszczoną w "Gazecie Wyborczej" (in reply to the job offer you placed in "Gazeta Wyborcza")*; *w odpowiedzi na ogłoszenie zamieszczone na stronie pracuj.pl (in reply to an advertisement placed on the pracuj.pl site)*; *chciałbym złożyć moją kandydaturę na stanowisko (I would like to submit my candidacy for the position of)*; *złożyłem podanie i CV w sekretariacie firmy (I have filed my application and CV at the secretary's office of the company)*; *pragnę zaproponować moją kandydaturę na stanowisko (I wish to propose my candidacy for the position of)*; *jestem zainteresowany ofertą pracy w Państwa firmie, którą znalazłem na Państwa stronie internetowej (I am interested in the job offer at your company I found on your website)*, *W przypadku jakichkolwiek wątpliwości i pytań, proszę o telefon (If you have any doubts or questions, do not hesitate to call)*. All handbooks recommend using a suitable style: avoidance of informal expressions, the use of formal vocabulary, e.g. *wymagać (to require)* instead of *potrzebować (to need)*, *gdyż (as)* instead of *bo (because)*, and the use of conditionals as more polite, e.g. *Chciałabym uzyskać szansę... (I would welcome a chance...)* (Latham-Koenig et al. 2015, p. 113).

Texts are written in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, usually in the present tense (to express one's interests, traits of character, passions and current job), with passages in the past tense while informing about education and professional experience, and future tenses in final promises to contribute as an asset to the company. The body of each utterance, which is a justification of one's application might be either traditional and copied from popular guidelines or templates (which does not prove why a candidate is better than the others), or more original, with an array of individual elements, drawing the attention of the reader and arousing his curiosity.

Dominant parts of speech in cover letters are nouns<sup>6</sup> (both proper and common nouns), including numerous gerunds, e.g. *kierowanie* (*managing*), *zaangażowanie* (*engaging*), *osiągnięcie* (*achieving*), *myślenie* (*thinking*), *wykonywanie* (*performing*), *wykorzystanie* (*using*), *zatrudnienie* (*employing*). Much less frequent are adjectives, e.g. *profesjonalny* (*professional*), *organizacyjny* (*organizational*), *efektywny* (*effective*), *kreatywny* (*creative*), *doskonały* (*excellent*), *promocyjny* (*promotional*), *skuteczny* (*efficient*), *techniczny* (*technical*), and verbs, e.g. *przedstawić* (*to present*), *pozwolić* (*to allow*), *kierować* (*to manage*), *pracować* (*to work*), *wnieść* (*to contribute*), *zgłosić* (*to apply*), *przesyłać* (*to send*), *sądzić* (*to believe*). Pronouns are very rare and usually refer to the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular.

Cover letters are written under the influence of the official, administrative style, with a precise and down-to-earth manner of expression, clichéd vocabulary, well-controlled and disciplined way of reasoning. All information is subordinated to support the main illocution, which is to persuade the recipient to employ the applicant. The self-presentation referring to the professional requirements and universal values makes the cover letter stiff and repetitive. Originality appears when offered positions are rare, e.g. of an attorney, police data analyst, school headmaster. Most templates refer to positions related to marketing, accountancy, data analysis, shop assistants, and retail salesmen. Therefore, lexis often includes specialist terminology in economy, industry, marketing as well as education.

Many analysed texts represent the canon variant of the genre. The normative patterns are often copied from handbooks and internet templates, therefore the utterances are clichéd and repetitive. Alternative variants include certain additional elements, e.g. a family story, a list of awards, travelling experience, hopes to be able to develop one's skills in a given position. Taking into account the affinity to official letters, applications (*podanie*), self-presentations, advertisement letters and the curriculum vitae, we can suggest that the cover letter is a complex and transgressive genre, combining elements of a few different ones, yet having its own strict rules and pattern. Therefore, it has its own style of the genre and a precisely defined identity.

Summing up, the cover letter is an official genre, that has a strictly specified structure, one dominant pragmatic goal (getting a job), supported by a presen-

<sup>6</sup> In a few templates of cover letters the ratio of nouns to all words in texts ranged from 30% to 50%.

tation of one's hard and social skills, shows the professional sphere of life with a universal system of values precious in the labour world, and is written in its own style, being a palimpsest of administrative, official, formal language and an individual self-presentation referring to the style of advertising slogans. Foreigners learning Polish as a second language should learn all aspects of the genre pattern to be able to write appropriately and use effectively their cover letters when the need arises to apply for jobs in Poland.

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### **LIST MOTYWACYJNY JAKO GATUNEK WYPOWIEDZI W GLOTTODYDAKTYCE POLONISTYCZNEJ**

**Słowa kluczowe:** genologia, gatunek mowy, wzorzec gatunkowy, list motywacyjny, glottodydaktyka polonistyczna

**Streszczenie.** Gatunki to wytwory kultur, odzwierciedlające potrzeby i praktyki społeczności, które je wytworzyły. Ucząc cudzoziemców języka polskiego jako obcego powinniśmy zapoznać ich z wieloma polskimi gatunkami wypowiedzi, zalecanymi w programach do nauczania języki polskiego jako obcego. List motywacyjny to stosunkowo nowy gatunek w polskim kontinuum mowy, przejęty po przełomie 1989 r. z kultury anglosaskiej. Jest to gatunek złożony, czerpiący z innych, takich jak list urzędowy, podanie, list reklamowy, życiorys. W artykule przedstawiono opis gatunku zgodnie z koncepcją wzorca gatunkowego Marii Wojtak, obejmującego cztery aspekty: strukturalny, pragmatyczny, poznawczy i językowy. Dynamika gatunku wpłynęła na powstanie wzorca kanonicznego oraz wzorców alternacyjnych i adaptacyjnych tej odmiany listu. Genologiczna definicja listu motywacyjnego mówi, że jest to krótki tekst (maksymalnie jednostronicowy) o ściśle określonej strukturze, którego celem jest skłonienie odbiorcy (pracodawcy) do zatrudnienia nadawcy, pokazuje on sferę życia związaną ze środowiskiem pracy i edukacji, zwykle wyrażony jest w sposób schematyczny i szablonowy (wzorce uzualne są często kopia wzorców normatywnych). Cudzoziemcy powinni poznać wszystkie cztery aspekty opisu tego gatunku dla efektywnej komunikacji w polskim środowisku językowym i kulturowym.