

THE ROLE OF DISCURSIVE STRUCTURE IN THE GENRE SPECIFICATION OF ONLINE DISCOURSES

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Abstract

The paper starts with the assumption that each time people engage in discourses, they perform social actions in order to adaptively satisfy their communicative purposes and needs (cf. Verschueren–Brisard 2009; Steen 2011; Giltrow 2013). Moreover, these social actions form types in accordance with the typical co-occurrences of typical discourse situations involving typical roles, typical themes and typical communicative goals targeted by discourse participants (cf. Bakhtin 1986). These typical co-occurrences serve as ground for the functioning of genre knowledge and result in typical patterns of construal.

In this paper, I present a two-pronged empirical study that reveals the role of discursive structure in the creation of the genre-specific character of online discourses. By discursive structural units, I mean discourse segments (usually larger than one sentence but smaller than the entire discourse) used by the speaker to accomplish a communicative strategy aimed at achieving a more specific communicative purpose. During the research, I used two types of data. On the one hand, I compiled a research corpus consisting of 50 online recipes and 50 online book reviews in Hungarian. On the other hand, I conducted an experiment in which one group of Hungarian native speaker informants (25 persons) had to create a recipe for a good novel, while another group of informants (25 persons) had to write a review of a given recipe. The research thus focused on the genres of recipe and (book) review. I performed corpus-based qualitative analyses on both datasets using the MAXQDA software. After carefully developing a data-driven annotation system on a smaller pilot material, I systematically identified the communicative strategic units of both the non-elicited and the elicited dataset [cf. Swales's (1990) move structure analysis]. The research findings are as follows: (i) Discursive structure formed by the speaker's communicative strategies is a genre-marking quality of the online discourses under study. (ii) Recipes written by laypersons and professionals do not have a different discursive structure but the identified discursive structure is very clearly manifested. (iii) Book reviews written by lay readers differ significantly from those written by professional critics in terms of discursive structure and this sharp differentiation reveals a separation between two more specific genres, i.e. amateur book review and professional critique.

Keywords: genre; discursive structure; discursive structural unit; communicative goal; qualitative corpus analysis; experiment

1. Introduction

Starting from the referential triangle of joint attention that inherently characterises language use (see Tomasello 1999: 94–133; Sinha 2005; Tátrai 2017a: 901–926), the notion of genre can be defined as a discursive schema and category that is operated by speakers at all times, functioning as an orientational pattern during the creation of discourses, and as a discursive expectation in the course of understanding (cf. Bakhtin 1986; Taavitsainen 2004; Steen 2011; Giltrow 2013; Busse 2014; Tátrai 2017b). The organization of genre knowledge is based on the fact that discourse participants perform social actions in order to adaptively satisfy certain communicative needs and goals. These social actions form types according to the typical co-occurrences of typical communicative situations involving typical participant roles, typical communicative goals and typical

themes (cf. Bakhtin 1986). These typical co-occurrences, in turn, establish typical patterns of construal (cf. Speyer–Fetzer 2014). Therefore, genres are emergent discursive schemas and usage-based discursive categories that function as a basis for the realisation of discourse events (i.e. joint attentional scenes) (cf. Tátrai 2017b).

From this social cognitive pragmatic perspective, the paper seeks to answer the question as to what role discursive structure plays in the emergence of genre in online discourses. I answer the research question with the results of an empirical study that focuses on the genres of online recipe and book review as characteristic genres of two thematic websites (cf. Ballagó 2022). These two genres were chosen because they activate different modes of understanding. While recipes activate a simpler type of understanding, the procedural mode of understanding (cf. Brown 1994; Tátrai 2011: 173–174), book reviews rely on a more complex type, that is, propositional (also known as declarative) mode of understanding (cf. Brown 1994; Tomasello 1999: 194–197; Tátrai 2011: 173–174). Thus, this choice allows for the comparison between two genres with different cognitive grounding.

In Section 2, I outline the main theoretical insights related to the so-called meso-level of discursive organization. Subsequently, in Section 3, I present the material and methods of a data-driven empirical study. The results are presented and discussed in Section 4: first, I present the role of discursive structure in the genre of the recipe (4.1), and then, in line with the patterns drawn by the data, I discuss the discursive structure of book reviews written by lay literary enthusiasts (4.2.1), and the discursive structure of reviews by professional literary critics (4.2.2) in separate sections. The paper ends with a summary of the conclusions.

2. Discursive structure functioning at the meso-level of discourses

The study interprets discursive structure as a factor of construal that functions at the meso-level of discourses. This meso-level involves discourse segments with a scope that is smaller than a whole utterance – i.e. “a stretch of language with a clear beginning and end, produced by the same person” (Verschueren 1999: 131; cf. also Tátrai 2011: 69–74) – but usually larger than a single clause representing a grounded process or the relationship of two clauses.

By discursive structural units, I mean functional units rather than merely formal ones. More extensive utterances can often be characterised by an articulated inner structure, based on the discursive actions the speaker performs in specific parts of the utterance. These discursive actions are distinguished from one another on the basis of their being directed towards a more specific communicative goal or towards satisfying a more specific communicative need. Thus, discursive structural units can be perceived as shorter or longer segments of the discourse that perform a discursive action aimed at achieving a more specific communicative goal (cf. van Dijk 1982; Swales 1990; Gea-Valor 2005; de Jong–Bugers 2013; Requiño–Belmonte 2016) – for example, recommending the reviewed book to be read or telling the story of the “birth” of the recipe. The reason why this phenomenon affects the meso-level of discourses is that discursive actions aimed at more specific goals are characteristically not realisable in a single sentence because they are much rather strategies than single acts and, therefore, cannot be treated as speech acts, i.e. communicative actions realised with a sentence (see Searle 1979; Tátrai 2017: 1008–1022).

The separation of structural units aimed at specific communicative goals can be marked iconically. In the case of written discourses, on the one hand, this means that distinct structural units may appear as typographically separated units (as is usually the case for the structural unit presenting the “story” of a recipe), comprising the possibility of separate paragraphs. On the other hand, explicit metapragmatic signals (cf. Verschueren 2000) can also prompt the marking of the separation of different discursive actions, and hence of discursive structural units (e.g. *Tapogatózó tájékoztásunk első lépéseként mindenesetre megállapíthatjuk* ‘As a tentative first step in our exploration, we can certainly state’).

Discursive structure can be considered to be crucial for genre because patterns of discursive actions aimed at more specific communicative goals can reveal the more general, typical

communicative goal of the discursive schema that is considered to be central to our genre knowledge. This is because these typical goals, along with the co-occurring typical themes and typical discursive situations, play a fundamental role in the formation and shaping of genre (see Introduction).

Social action-centred approaches to genre (e.g. Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993) place this aspect, that is, the discursive structure created by patterns of social actions at the forefront of genre analysis. A linguistic unit directed towards the realisation of a specific communicative goal is termed a *communicative move* – hence the name of this approach is *move structure analysis*. The action carried out by the communicative move is referred to as *communicative strategy*. Moreover, researchers who share these assumptions identify these structural units (*moves*) at the meso-level of discourses and adopt a clearly inductive approach to the categories of analysis, relying upon the qualitative interpretation of concrete linguistic data (see Gea-Valor 2005; de Jong–Burgers 2013; Tardy–Swales 2014).¹ Therefore, in my research on the role of discursive structure in genre specification, I relied mostly on this approach since it also studies functional units at the meso-level of utterances, associated with discursive actions directed at specific communicative goals. Furthermore, such a view of discursive structure fundamentally adheres to a functional perspective, similarly to the present paper. Lastly, empirical studies within the framework of move structure analysis provide convincing examples of identifying discursive actions in specific texts (cf. de Jong–Burgers 2013; Requijo–Belmonta 2016).

3. Data and methods of the empirical study

For the purposes of the study, I have divided the central research question on the role of discursive structure in genre specification into two sub-questions in order to obtain empirically answerable questions:

RQ1) How are online recipes and book reviews structured?

RQ2) In terms of discursive structure, are there any features of the discursive schemas under study that are crucial for the emergence of genre, and if so, what are they?

To answer the first question, I relied on non-elicited data (cf. Bednarek 2011). I compiled a research corpus consisting of a total of 100 texts in Hungarian: 50 online recipes and 50 online book reviews. For both genres, I included 25 texts of amateur, layperson contributors and 25 texts of professional contributors in the corpus, since both online genres can be categorised based on the level of expertise and topic-related knowledge of the contributors. Specifically, there are recipes written by amateur hobby cooks, as well as more professional recipes by chefs who practice cooking as a profession. In parallel, we can distinguish between book reviews by lay literary enthusiasts and critiques by professional readers, i.e. literary scholars. The sources of the texts included in the corpus are presented in Table 1.

¹ Among the various genre theorists, representatives of the so-called new rhetorical approach (e.g. Miller 1984; Bazerman 1988) consider the discursive identification of different rhetorical actions, where rhetorical actions refer to communicative actions aimed at specific goals, particularly significant for genre research. However, representatives of this school do not identify these rhetorical actions at the meso-level of discursive organization, but rather primarily at the sentence level. Thus, a developmental trend of this school has emerged, utilising corpus linguistic resources to identify and label rhetorical actions on a string basis (i.e. construction basis), creating an extensive system of categories for rhetorical actions. Based on this system, extensive thesauri have been developed, allowing for automatic analysis of rhetorical moves (see Kaufer et al. 2005; Klebanov et al. 2016).

	Sources of online recipes (50 recipes in total)	Sources of online book reviews (50 book reviews in total)
amateur	nosalty.hu (9 texts)	moly.hu (25 texts)
	receptneked.hu (8 texts)	
	cookpad.com/hu (8 texts)	
professional	streetkitchen.hu (25 texts)	litera.hu (25 texts)

Table 1. Composition of the research corpus

When selecting 25 texts per category, I followed roughly uniform principles but this being a qualitative study, I refined these principles based on the specificities of the websites-types serving as sources. Due to space limitations, I do not elaborate on the details here (but see Ballagó in press). The size of the research corpus is 48,452 texts in total:

	Online recipes 11,562 tokens in total		Online book reviews 36,890 tokens in total	
	total length:	average length/text:	total length:	average length/text:
amateur	4460 tokens	186 tokens	4738 tokens	190 tokens
professional	6902 tokens	276 tokens	32,152 tokens	1286 tokens

Table 2. Size of the research corpus

A systematic qualitative analysis of the research corpus can produce an answer to RQ1), describing how genre unfolds in its natural discursive context and the role discursive structure plays in it. On its own, however, it is less suitable for answering RQ2) because the corpus-based analysis does not shed much light on the production of genre instantiations that is in the forefront of this question. Specifically, the corpus does not highlight what are the natural, “on-line” discursive processes operated by speakers when, by activating certain discursive schemas, they produce utterances, and what are the meaning-generating procedures concerning discursive structure that are crucial to them.

Therefore, as a complement to the analysis of the research corpus, I also conducted an experiment embedded in a questionnaire. Within this framework, respondents divided into two groups (50 people in total) were asked to solve a creative text creation task (cf. Domonkosi–Kuna 2022).² One half of the informants (25 people) were asked to “Create a recipe for a good novel”, while the other half (25 people) received the task to “Write a review of the following online recipe” – at this point, both a link and a screenshot of a recipe titled *Palacsinta alaprecept Csillától* ‘Basic pancake recipe from Csilla’ were presented from nosalty.hu.³ The experiment was thus built on a combination of the genres under study, aiming to systematically identify the key construal processes that, based on the participants’ genre knowledge, shape discursive events into a recipe or a review, even a discourse event that may not typically activate these genres. Thus, the data elicited by the

² Informants were aged 20-62 years (average age: 33.5 years), with a gender distribution of 41 women and 9 men.

³ <https://www.nosalty.hu/recept/palacsinta-alaprecept-csillától> (31. 07. 2023.)

researcher also shed light on the structural characteristics of recipes and book reviews that are essential for the emergence of these genres.

I analysed the research corpus as well as the material compiled from novel recipes and recipe reviews obtained during the experiment, using MAXQDA⁴ software, following the same qualitative methodology. The systematic identification of discursive structural units was carried out in a data-driven manner, by applying the same category system for both non-elicited and elicited data in the analysis. To identify discursive structural units, I first developed a preliminary coding scheme using a smaller pilot dataset. As the annotation system was extended to the entire material, it became necessary to continuously check, revise and supplement the previously established categories. As a result, a consistent annotation system was eventually developed that I was able to apply consistently across the entire dataset of the research. The following sections present the established analytical categories, i.e. the identified discursive structural units, their frequency data, and the conclusions drawn from the emerging patterns.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Discursive structure of recipes

Regarding the typical structural composition of recipes, the fundamental observation is that there are highly stable structural units – titled *Hozzávalók* 'Ingredients' and *Elkészítés* 'Preparation'⁵ – which, based on the results of the study, are deemed essential for an utterance to instantiate the discursive schema of a recipe (cf. Kuna 2016). This applies to both amateur and professionally written recipes. In addition, beyond 'Ingredients' and 'Preparation', the two groups of recipes showed only minor differences from each other in terms of additional structural units, and these differences were rarely systematic. The relatively consistent nature of this is illustrated in Figure 6.

⁴ VERBI Software, MAXQDA 2020, software, 2023, maxqda.com.

⁵ The literal translation of *Elkészítés* is 'Preparation' but in English recipes, this unit is usually titled *Method* or *Directions*.

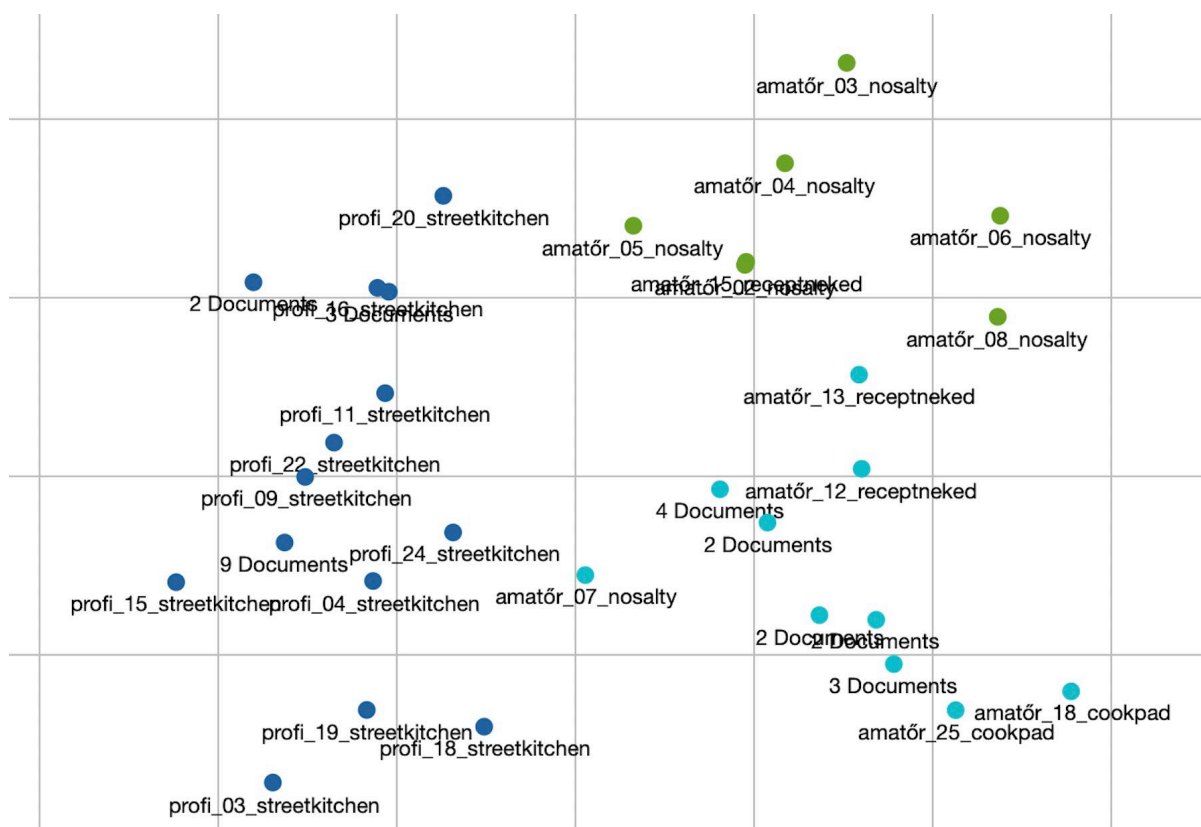


Figure 1. Similarity of amateur and professionally written recipes in terms of discursive structure^{6,7}

The meso-level discursive units identified in the research corpus are presented in Table 3, along with their frequency data. The order of the structural units listed in the table is (largely) also an iconic illustration of the typical sequence of discursive units identified in genre instantiations.

Labels and code numbers of discursive structural units		Amateur recipes (total number of recipes: 25)		Professional recipes (total number of recipes: 25)	
		Absolute freq.	In how many recipes?	Absolute freq.	In how many recipes?
1.1.	Untitled introductory section (multiple different sections can appear in one recipe); “framework”				
1.1.1.	Basic information about the recipe	41	23 (92%)	49	25 (100%)
1.1.2.	The story of the “birth” of the recipe	3	3 (12%)	2	2 (8%)
1.1.3.	Personal note on the recipe	4	4 (16%)	4	4 (16%)
1.1.4.	Additional information about the recipe	3	3 (12%)	2	2 (8%)

⁶ Figures 1 and 2 were created using the visualization tools of MAXQDA software, based on a calculation of the so-called “simple match” of codes. For details, see <https://www.maxqda.com/help-mx20/mixed-methods-functions/similarity-analysis-for-documents> (06. 10. 2023.)

⁷ Legend: amatőr_NUMBER_SOURCE = amateur_NUMBER_SOURCE; profi_NUMBER_SOURCE = professional_NUMBER_SOURCE

1.1.5.	Developing a positive attitude to the recipe	2	2 (8%)	17	17 (68%)
1.2.	Section titled <i>Hozzávalók</i> 'Ingredients'	25	25 (100%)	25	25 (100%)
1.3.	Section titled <i>Előkészületek</i> 'Preparations'	–	–	–	–
1.4.	Section titled <i>Elkészítés</i> 'Preparation'/'Method'	25	25 (100%)	25	25 (100%)
1.4.1.	Closing instructions	–	–	–	–
1.4.2.	Serving/Consuming the product	8	8 (32%)	8	8 (32%)
1.4.3.	Product of the preparation process	2	2 (8%)	3	3 (12%)
1.5.	Additional remarks (within the 'Ingredients' or 'Preparation'/'Method' section)				
1.5.1.	Warning, advice	4	4 (16%)	3	2 (8%)
1.5.2.	Interpretation, comment	32	13 (52%)	41	21 (84%)
1.6.	Untitled, typographically separated instructions	–	–	–	–
1.7.	Section titled <i>Ajánló</i> 'Recommendations'; "framework"	2	2 (8%)	–	–
1.8.	Section titled <i>Tipp</i> 'Hint'; "framework"	4	4 (16%)	–	–
1.9.	Untitled closing section (a recipe may contain more than one of the following sections); "framework"				
1.9.1.	Closure of the entire recipe: saying goodbye	–	–	25	25 (100%)
1.9.2.	Recommendation of other recipes	–	–	23	23 (92%)

Table 3. Discursive structural units and their frequency data identified in the research corpus of authentic recipes from recipe websites ⁸

The most important structural units of the recipes were, therefore, the sections titled 'Ingredients' and 'Preparation', in this order. The 'Ingredients' section implemented the discursive schema of a list, with which the recipe writer achieved the more specific goal of drawing the recipient's attention to the ingredients needed for preparing the dish and their exact quantities:

- (1) *Hozzávalók*
 1 kg vajbab (sárgahüvelyű „zöldbab”)
 1 fej vöröshagyma
 1 ek kacsaszír
 2 mokkáskanál csemege őrölt pirospaprika
 1 csokor petrezselyemzöld
 1-2 ek 6%-os balzsamecet (ízlés szerint)
 ízlés szerint só⁹

'Ingredients
 1 kg of butter beans (yellow-podded “green-beans”)
 1 head red onion

⁸ In Tables 3 and 4, bold type indicates that the discursive structural unit in question occurred in at least 50% of the sample. In cases where the entire line is highlighted in colour, the relative frequency of the structural unit exceeded 50% in both amateur and professional text groups.

⁹ <https://cookpad.com/hu/receptek/16427043-zoldbabfozelek> (01. 10. 2023.)

- 1 tbsp duck fat
- 2 coffee-spoon sweet finely ground Hungarian paprika
- 1 bunch of parsley green
- 1-2 tbsp 6% balsamic vinegar (to taste)

An understanding of this list, illustrated with example (1), is essential for the recipe genre to achieve its purpose, i.e. the reader being able to prepare the given dish. However, the list of ingredients activates procedural understanding in such a way that the activity of instructing is not elaborated in a linguistically explicit manner. Thus, for the successful operation of 'how-to-do' type (i.e. procedural) understanding, the recipient needs to rely more heavily upon her contextual knowledge which is activated with little support from linguistic reference points, and as part of this, her genre knowledge (cf. Emmott 1999: 21–23; Simon 2014: 107–109). In the research corpus, the 'Ingredients' section was often divided into sub-units with sub-headings (e.g. *A tésztához* 'For the dough'; *A krémhez és a töltelékhez* 'For the cream and filling'). With this subdivision, the recipe writer indicated the different stages of dish preparation and that the items in the list could be grouped together along these lines. Therefore, the grouping of ingredients allows for the separation of the actions or sequences of actions expected from the recipe reader.

The experiment nuanced all of this by showing that in the elicited novel recipes, the most frequently occurring meso-level discursive unit was the list of ingredients, identifiable in 88% of the elicited recipes (i.e. in 22 out of 25). This high frequency indicates that the 'Ingredients' section is capable of functioning as a genre-marking structural unit of the recipe, even in a discursive event considered atypical due to the experimental setting. Nevertheless, the results of the experiment also suggest that the list of ingredients is a discursive unit of such central importance that it may be sufficient for the successful activation of the recipe genre even without the 'Preparation' section. Indeed, among the elicited recipes there were three texts that did not contain an instructional section but only a list of ingredients.

The second most important structural unit of the recipes was the one titled 'Preparation' in which the instructions for preparing the particular dish became linguistically more elaborated compared to the 'Ingredients'. This means that in this section, the recipe writer construes the non-discursive, manual sequence of actions that the recipe reader needs to perform in order to successfully prepare the dish, aligning with the intentions of the speaker.

- (2) *Elkészítés*
A tésztához
1. A tojásokat szétszedjük, a fehérjéből cukorral fényes, krémes habot készítünk.
 2. Az élesztőt egy csipet cukorral kevés langyos tejben felfuttatjuk.
 3. A tojássárgáját egy tálba öntjük, hozzáadjuk a puha vaját, a tejfölt, a felfutott élesztőt, sózzuk és elkeverjük. [...] ¹⁰

'Preparation

For the dough

1. Separate the eggs, beat the whites with the sugar until shiny and creamy.
2. Dissolve the yeast with a pinch of sugar in a little lukewarm milk.
3. Pour the egg yolks in a bowl, add the soft butter, sour cream, the dissolved yeast, season with salt and mix.'

As shown in example (2), amateur recipes contained numbered instructions guiding the reader on how to perform each expected action. The instructions on [cookpad.com/hu](https://www.nosalty.hu/recept/pavaszem-suti) were also illustrated with photos, providing the recipient with a model for the adequate implementation of the instructions. This

¹⁰ <https://www.nosalty.hu/recept/pavaszem-suti> (01. 10. 2023.)

modelling was well-aligned with the construal of interpersonal relations: the use of 1Sg forms was more frequent on cookpad.com/hu compared to other sites (see Ballagó in press).

Regarding the 'Preparation' section, however, the elicited recipes draw attention to a crucial aspect. Namely, that this instructional section is less important, less substantial as a discursive unit of the recipe genre than the 'Ingredients' section. In fact, this structural unit was identifiable in only 17 of the 25 elicited recipes, i.e. 68% of the novel recipes. This frequency is of course not low at all, which means that 'Preparation' is indeed a significant structural unit of the recipe genre. However, it seems that a list-like enumeration of ingredients is more crucial for achieving the central communicative goal of the genre than specifying what, in what order, and how the user of the recipe should do with the ingredients mentioned before.

This can be well supported by the fact that individuals who are more experienced in the kitchen are likely to be able to prepare a dish even in the absence of linguistically detailed instructions if they know the exact name of the dish as well as the ingredients and their quantities. However, if the list of ingredients and/or their exact quantities are unknown (especially in the case of cakes/pastry that require high precision), then even if the instructions are explained in detail, the preparation process may not be successful.

Beyond the 'Ingredients' and the 'Preparation', all amateur and professionally written recipes included at least one photo depicting the dish to be prepared, relatively close-up (see Picture 1, 2). However, among the elicited recipes, there was only one novel recipe that included a visual illustration.



Picture 1. Food illustration from nosalty.hu¹¹



Picture 2. Food illustration form streetkitchen.hu¹²

If we examine the additional discursive structural units of the recipes, both the untitled introductory part, the structural units titled *Ajánló* 'Recommendation' and *Tipp* 'Hint', and the untitled closing section served a similar function within the discursive scheme of the recipe. They functioned as a kind of discursive "frame" that aimed to support and contextualise the instructive activity at the centre of the recipe. This supportive, discursive scaffolding role (cf. Tomasello 1999: 78–81, 2001; Simon 2014: 76–79), in turn, could be realised through various discursive strategies, as indicated by the variety of codes and subcodes listed in Table 3. However, due to the length limits of this paper, I refrain from a detailed description of these structural units. Moreover, the elaboration of these in the elicited recipes was either missing (e.g. the sections titled 'Recommendation' and 'Hint') or their occurrence was relatively rare.

¹¹ <https://www.nosalty.hu/recept/csipos-mezes-szezamagos-csirke-rizzsel> (02. 10. 2023.)

¹² <https://streetkitchen.hu/fitt/balzsamecetes-ceklakremleves-dioval/> (02. 10. 2023.)

4.2. Discursive structure of book reviews

Corpus-based analyses suggest that the discursive structure of book reviews, whether they are amateur or professional, is much less distinctly outlined than that of recipes. Nevertheless, the study did identify certain patterns, which made it clear that there are salient differences between the meso-level structural organization of the discursive schemas activating two different modes of understanding: the ones that activate procedural and the others that activate propositional understanding (i.e. recipes vs. book reviews). On the other hand, while the discursive structure did not substantially differ between recipes from authors with varying expertise, in the case of book reviews, the discursive structure was found to play a proactive role in the differentiation and formation of the more specific genre categories for amateur book reviews and professional critiques. Figure 2 highlights this distinction.

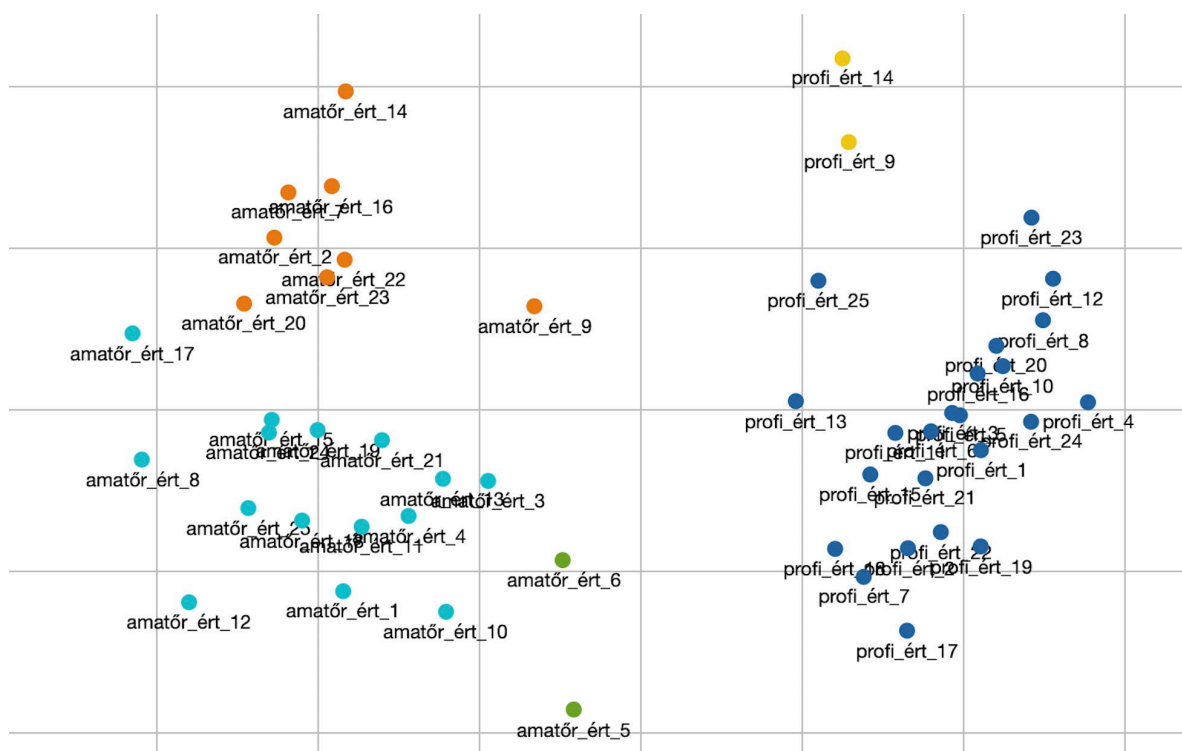


Figure 2. Similarity of amateur book reviews and professional critiques in terms of discursive structure¹³

The meso-level discursive strategic units identified in the research corpus along with their frequency data are presented in Table 4. The order of structural units listed in the table does not illustrate any typical sequencing here, since these argumentative genres exhibit a much different meso-level structuring compared to instructive recipes that activate procedural understanding (cf. Hyland 1990; Speyer–Fetzer 2014; Becker–Palmer–Frank 2016).

¹³Legend: amatőr_ért_NUMBER = amateur_review_NUMBER; profi_ért_NUMBER = professional_review_NUMBER

Labels and code numbers of discursive structural units		Amateur book reviews (total number of reviews: 25)		Professional book reviews aka. critiques (total number of reviews: 25)	
		Absolute freq.	In how many reviews?	Absolute freq.	In how many reviews?
2.1.	Section expressing an evaluative attitude				
2.1.1.	"Star rating"	25	25 (100%)	–	–
2.1.2.	Positive evaluation	38	22 (88%)	89	23 (92%)
2.1.3.	Negative evaluation	12	8 (32%)	36	16 (64%)
2.1.4.	Arguments for the evaluation	17	11 (44%)	81	20 (80%)
2.2.	Section expressing emotional attitude				
2.2.1.	Positive emotional attitude	50	18 (72%)	1	1 (4%)
2.2.2.	Negative emotional attitude	21	8 (32%)	2	2 (8%)
2.2.3.	Arguments for the emotional attitude	26	11 (44%)	1	1 (4%)
2.3.	Non-evaluative, non-emotional section				
2.3.1.	Thesis: neutral, descriptive statement	17	7 (28%)	274	25 (100%)
2.3.2.	Arguments for the thesis	11	5 (20%)	262	25 (100%)
2.3.3.	Summary of the argumentation	1	1 (4%)	11	9 (36%)
2.3.4.	Quoting and interpreting section				
2.3.4.1.	Direct quotation from the text under review	6	6 (24%)	209	21 (84%)
2.3.4.2.	Direct quotation from elsewhere	1	1 (4%)	34	8 (32%)
2.3.4.3.	Evocation of the passage to be interpreted	4	4 (16%)	14	8 (32%)
2.3.4.4.	Interpretation of a specific passage	2	1 (4%)	10	3 (12%)
2.4.	Narrative of the reception of the text under review	15	13 (52%)	2	2 (8%)
2.5.	Presentation of literary critical reception	–	–	6	3 (12%)
2.6.	Turning to the discourse partner(s)	7	6 (24%)	1	1 (4%)
2.7.	Introduction				
2.7.1.	Introduction by the reviewer	8	8 (32%)	19	19 (76%)
2.7.2.	Introduction by the website's editorial team	–	–	25	25 (100%)
2.8.	Conclusion	12	12 (48%)	15	15 (60%)

Table 4. Discursive structural units and their frequency data identified in the research corpus of authentic book reviews from book review websites

Lay book reviews and professional literary critiques are fundamentally organised at the meso-level of discourse by the fact that the reviewer first makes a statement, i.e. a thesis, accessible, and then elaborates and supports this thesis with further statements and arguments deemed adequate in

the given context (cf. Speyer–Fetzer 2014). At the same time, however, the way individual theses and the arguments supporting them were classified into types, and how these types were organised into patterns in combination with other discursive units, played a crucial role in the separation and specification of the genres of amateur book reviewing and professional literary criticism, based on the results of the corpus-based analysis. I therefore discuss the two specific genres separately in the following sections.

4.2.1. Discursive structure of amateur book reviews

Amateur book reviews, which are significantly shorter than professional ones (average length: 190 tokens), are slightly more varied in terms of discursive structure than professional literary critiques. The only section that appeared in all amateur book reviews was the evaluation using “star ratings”. On the one hand, this feature clearly distinguished reviews by amateur enthusiasts from professional critic’s reviews, and on the other hand, it created a similarity to online, lay reviews of other cultural products (e.g. films) and the consumer reviews of various products as well.

Similarly high relative frequency data showed that positive evaluations were present in 88% of amateur book reviews, whereas expressing negative evaluative attitudes was quite rare. The formulation of a polarised thesis, i.e. a proposition expressing the speaker’s positive or negative evaluative attitude towards the cultural product being evaluated, was an essential part of the “section expressing an evaluative attitude” (cf. Alba-Juez–Thompson 2014; Bednarek 2014; Carratero–Taboada 2014) that could be of varying length and elaboration. However, it is also crucial to note that lay literary enthusiasts did not necessarily support their positive or negative evaluations with arguments. More precisely, they often supported their positive or negative evaluations with other discursive strategies such as presenting the plot of the reviewed literary work as a story, characterising the characters, or telling the story of the unique, one-off reception of the book that the reviewer’s previous self had experienced in the past.

- (3) Nagyon szép ez a történet. Nem csak mondanivalója, hanem az írásmódja is. Végig lekötött, nagyon gyorsan haladtam vele, itt-ott meg is könnyeztem. A főszereplő Calla az első fejezetekben kifejezetten antipatikuss volt, felszínes bulikirálynő, aztán ahogy rétegenként bukkan fel a valódi jelleme abszolút kedvelhetővé vált, még akkor is, ha valójában városi lány marad. Jonah nekem kezdetektől szimpatikus figura volt, ahogy a többiek is, a maguk hibáival együtt. Alaszka bemutatása pedig elég részletes és alapos ahhoz, hogy magam is vágyjak egy rövid látogatásra, néhány kisrepülő útra, és pár szemtelen mosómedvére – persze nem hosszabb távon, mert ehhez én is városi lány vagyok. Hozzánőtt a szívemhez az Egyszerű vadon, még ha bonyolult is.¹⁴

‘This is a very beautiful story. Not only the message, but also its writing style. It kept me engaged all along, I progressed through it very quickly, and there were moments when I even shed a tear. The main character, Calla, was distinctly antipathetic in the first chapters, a superficial party queen, but as her true character emerges layer by layer, she becomes genuinely likeable, even if she remains a city girl at heart. Jonah was for me a sympathetic character from the beginning, along with the others, flaws and all. The portrayal of Alaska is detailed and thorough enough to make me crave for a short visit, a little plane trip, and a few cheeky raccoons – of course, not for the long term, because I’m also a city girl for that. I’ve grown fond of Simple Wilderness, even if it is complicated.’

In example (3), I coded the part underlined with a straight line as “positive evaluation” because the speaker attributes an aesthetic quality (beauty) to the story of the book, and expresses their positive evaluative attitude towards the object of evaluation. The following, longer discursive unit, which

¹⁴ <https://moly.hu/ertekeselek/4792044> (12. 10. 2023.)

in fact argues for the positive evaluation by elaborating it, is also coded as the “narrative of the reception of the text under review”. However, the example illustrates that the narrative of the past reception intertwines with the plot of the reviewed novel and the reviewer’s emotional attitudes to the characters in the plot. The last sentence, underlined with a wavy line, can be interpreted as a summary of this section and, in a way, of the entire review. The underlining indicates that I annotated this sentence as a “section expressing emotional attitude”, specifically as “positive emotional attitude”. Therefore, the middle section serves as not only an argument for the opening, positively evaluating thesis but also as preparation for the concluding proposition elaborating on the reviewer’s emotional attitude.

The analysis also points out, on the one hand, that more than half (52%) of the amateur book reviews in the corpus had the characteristic of presenting the reception of the evaluated literary work as a narrative, recounting the personal experience of the reader in the past. Thus, the schema of narrative discourses was embedded in basically argumentative discourses:

- (4) [...] Az író annyira jól csűrte-csavarta a szálakat, hogy sokszor erősen koncentrálnom kellett az ok-okozati tényezőkre, nehogy lemaradjak valamiről. Megdöbbsentem a végkimenetelen is, mert nem számítottam ilyen fejleményekre.
A folytatást is biztos elolvasom majd. :)¹⁵

[...] The writer was so good at twisting and turning the threads that I often had to concentrate hard on the cause-and-effect factors, lest I miss something. I was also shocked at the outcome because I didn’t expect such developments.
I’ll definitely read the sequel as well. :)

As also exemplified by (4), 72% of amateur book reviews included at least one section expressing positive emotional attitude; by contrast, only 32% of the amateur reviews contained a section expressing negative emotional attitude (cf. Péter 1991; Russel 2003; Tolcsvai Nagy 2017: 319). This positive or negative emotional attitude could be directed towards the work under review in general or towards a particular character in the book (e.g. *Hoppácska itt egy Hudson nevezetű pasi aki jófiú, mégis imádtam végig* ‘Oopsie, here’s a guy named Hudson who is a good guy, yet I loved him throughout’).

The experiment supplemented all of these results by revealing which of the discursive units mentioned earlier can be derived from a more generic discursive schema of evaluation. The study found that in elicited reviews, there was only one discursive structural unit crucial for activating the discursive schema of evaluation: unsurprisingly, this was the “section expressing an evaluative attitude”. Moreover, the elicited texts were often characterised by the absence of any discursive strategy other than the section that elaborates the positive and/or negative evaluative attitude of the speaker and – from time to time but not necessarily – the arguments for it. Thus, for the activation of a rather generic discursive schema of evaluation, the expression of an evaluative attitude alone is sufficient. In comparison, all the further structural features presented above play a proactive role in shaping the much more specific genre characteristics of amateur book reviews.

4.2.2. Discursive structure of professional literary critiques

The most important general observation regarding the considerably longer professional reviews (average length: 1286 tokens) is that their typical structure is much more canonised (think of university seminars on critique writing). The critiques published on *litera.hu* were also characterised by a discursive unit whose presence, similar to the star rating on *moly.hu*, was directly a trace of the activity of the website’s editorial team. This quasi-uniform discursive unit identified in all the critiques was annotated as “introduction by the website’s editorial team”:

¹⁵ <https://moly.hu/ertekesek/4626538> (12. 10. 2023.)

- (5) Ha valaki ott látja működképesnek a szöveget, ahol az a közlés tengelyén tulajdonképpen megbukik, milyen távlatokban gondol saját művészetére és a művészetre egyáltalán? – Kustos Júlia kritikáját olvashatják Závada Péter Gondoskodás című kötetéről. [...]¹⁶

‘If one sees the text as viable where it actually fails on the axis of communication, in what perspective does one contemplate regarding their own art and art in general? – Read Júlia Kustos’s critique on Péter Závada’s book titled “Gondoskodás” (‘Care’)’

Subsequently, 76% of the reviews begin with an introductory section from the author of the review, which achieves its basic goal through a variety of strategies.

- (6) Szvoren Edina legújabb könyve olyan összetett, hogy komplex elemzésére ezeken az oldalakon nem teszek kísérletet. Ahogy első olvasásra nehéz lenne megválaszolni az olyan, egyébként releváns kérdéseket is, hogy miért van a kötet két részre tagolva, és mi a lényegi különbség az Ohrwurm-jegyzetek és a novellák között, azonkívül, hogy az utóbbiak hosszabbak. Történt-e fontos változás az elbeszélő módban az előző novelláskötethez képest? Mit tudhatunk meg a világról ezeknek az írásoknak a segítségével? [...]¹⁷

‘Edina Szvoren’s latest book is so complex that I won’t attempt a complex analysis on these pages. Just as it would be difficult on a first read to answer otherwise relevant questions such as why the volume is divided into two parts and what is the essential difference between the Ohrwurm notes and the short stories, apart from the fact that the latter are longer. Have there been any significant changes in the narrative mode compared to the previous collection of short stories? What can we learn about the world through these writings?’

Example (6) is a more typical introduction, based on the analysed sample, which starts with the author of the literary work under review. Then, the speaker explicitly reflects on the discursive situation of critique the itself, and outlines possible tasks and goals of the critic. Finally, the reviewer formulates a rhetorical question from the perspective of the recipient of the literary work.

However, it was characteristic of the critiques that the critics reflected on the discursive organization through more explicit metapragmatic signals, often spanning entire complex sentences. In other words, at the beginning of a new structural unit, they formulated reflections on the fact that they were beginning to implement a new sequence of discursive actions aimed at achieving a new communicative goal:

- (7) Tapogatózó tájékozódásunk első lépéseként mindenesetre megállapíthatjuk¹⁸

‘As a tentative first step in our exploration, we can certainly state’

Nevertheless, this points to the fact that discursive structuring for more specific communicative purposes plays a crucial role in successful comprehension.

The sections following the introduction do not exhibit such clear typical sequencing as observed in recipes. However, in contrast to amateur book reviews, professional critiques demonstrated a more stable pattern characterised by a discursive structure built along the lines of thesis–argumentation. Furthermore, in professional reviews, it was typical that the speaker first formulated a “neutral”, i.e. neither evaluative nor emotional thesis, and then, through a longer or shorter discourse segment, supported or elaborated on the content of this central proposition with further

¹⁶ <https://litera.hu/magazin/kritika/puritan-fokusz-bojt.html> (13. 10. 2023.)

¹⁷ <https://litera.hu/magazin/kritika/csodalkozik-hogy-csodalkoznak.html> (13. 10. 2023.)

¹⁸ <https://litera.hu/magazin/kritika/csodalkozik-hogy-csodalkoznak.html> (13. 10. 2023.)

statements (cf. Pléh 2014: 321–322). Quantitative data (see Table 4) also draw our attention to the fact that almost every “neutral” thesis was accompanied by an argumentation (272 theses vs. 262 arguments), and both discursive units were identifiable in each critique.

- (8) [...] A szöveg felépítése az élőbeszédet idézi. Az elbeszélőnek hirtelen eszébe jut valami, elkalandozik, majd akár tíz oldallal később észbe kap, és újra felveszi az eredeti történet fonalát. Az egyes szám második személyű, közvetlen beszédmód is ezt a hatást erősíti. Az íráskép ugyancsak ezt tükrözi: többsoros mondatok útvesztőjébe vezetnek a szabad gondolatsorok. A szöveg csak minimálisan tördelt, klasszikus párbeszédet nem tartalmaz, így a szereplők számán felül az áttekinthetőség is nehezíti az olvasó dolgát. [...] ¹⁹

‘The structure of the text is reminiscent of spoken language. The narrator suddenly remembers something, goes off on a tangent, and may only pick up the original thread of the story ten pages later. This effect is reinforced by the direct, second-person singular voice. The writing style reflects this too: a maze of multi-line sentences leads into a free flow of thought. The text is only minimally punctuated, lacks classical dialogues, so that, in addition to the number of characters, the lack of clarity also makes it challenging for the reader.’

Example (8) illustrates that in this case, the speaker’s perspective, as a construing subject with evaluative and/or emotional attitudes, is not profiled in the linguistic construal at all. Within this section, however, a direct quotation from the reviewed text, usually followed by a precise indication of the source of the quotation (as an explicit metapragmatic signal), was found in the reviews with a particularly high absolute frequency.

Finally, it is important to mention the passages expressing the speaker’s evaluative attitude: “positive evaluation” occurred in 92% of the reviews, “negative evaluation” in 64%, and “arguments for the evaluation” in 80%.

- (9) [...] Ha kontextus nélkül (vagy akár a *Beszélgetések* ismeretében) olvassuk az *Önéletrajzaimat*, egyáltalán nem lesz világos, hova fut ki az az átfogó művészeti-filozófiai-önéletrajzi projekt, amit fentebb, a hetvenes évek fordulata kapcsán emlegettem. Az ugyanis a *Beszélgetések* után mintha nem is az írói teljesítményben, hanem annak elméletében kívánna öszszegződni. Már nem az elmélet ad segédegyenest a műhöz, hanem fordítva. A vertikális regény mindent és mindenkit átfogó krisztusi egysége túlárad saját határain, és végül felülír minden formai követelményt – mind a próza, mind az elmélet, mind önreflexió síkján. Az életmű teljes szétesése/végső szintézise tehát nem az *Önéletrajzaim* lapjain, hanem a jegyzetfüzetekben, a személyes levelekben, az utolsó interjúkban rajzolódik ki. [...] ²⁰

‘If we read *Önéletrajzaim* ‘My Autobiographies’ without context (or even without knowing the *Beszélgetések* ‘Conversations’), it will not be clear where the comprehensive artistic-philosophical-autobiographical project I mentioned above, around the turn of the seventies, leads. It seems that after *Beszélgetések*, it is intended to be summarised not in the performance of the writer, but in the theory of it. It is no longer the theory that provides a tangent to the work, but the other way around. The all-encompassing Christian unity of the vertical novel overflows its own boundaries and finally overrides all formal requirements – on the levels of prose, theory and self-reflection alike. Thus, the complete disintegration/final synthesis of the oeuvre is not drawn out on the pages of *Önéletrajzaim*, but in the notebooks, the personal letters, the final interviews.’

¹⁹ <https://litera.hu/magazin/kritika/azt-hitted-erdemes.html> (13. 10. 2023.)

²⁰ <https://litera.hu/magazin/kritika/obol-es-fok-1.html> (13. 10. 2023.)

In example (9), I coded the underlined sentence as “negative evaluation” and the following section as the “argument for the evaluation”. The example also illustrates that professional critiques evaluate in a very different manner than amateur book reviews. Here, the evaluation is much more implicitly polarised (cf. Bednarek 2009), resulting in a stronger demand for mobilising relevant contextual knowledge and an adequate interpretation of the direct textual context, the co-text, to identify the given statement as an evaluation.

5. Conclusions

In this study, I examined how the discursive structure of online recipes and book reviews emerges (RQ1), and which features of these discourses are essential for the emergence of their specific genre character (RQ2). By discursive structure, I meant the discursive organisation of utterances at the meso-level, i.e. the scope of the utterances which typically encompasses units larger than a sentence but smaller than the entire utterance. In my interpretation, discursive structural units are parts of utterances of various length through which the speaker implements a discursive strategy of action aimed at achieving a more specific communicative goal. The empirical study of these discursive units is crucial in terms of genre because the patterns of discursive strategies directed towards more specific communicative goals outline the typical communicative purposes considered central to the emergence of genres as discursive schemas.

I developed the categories of qualitative analyses by using an inductive approach. Following a series of test analyses in several stages, I applied a data-driven annotation scheme to the entire dataset, both the research corpus and the elicited material. On the basis of all this, the research produced the following results.

As an essential finding, it can be stated that discursive structure clearly proved to be a genre-marking aspect of construal in both recipes and amateur book reviews, as well as in professional critiques.

As regards the discursive structure of recipes, there were no significant differences between the recipes of amateur hobby cooks and professional chefs. Thus, the patterns of discursive structure did not initiate further genre specification within the discursive category of recipes. However, the analysis of both non-elicited and elicited data clearly indicated that there are certain essential, genre-marking structural units in recipes. The most important of these is the *Hozzávalók* ‘Ingredients’ section, which activates procedural understanding by implementing the discursive schema of a list of things and their exact quantities. The experiment suggests that this section may be sufficient in itself to activate the genre of the recipe. The other structural unit, which also proved to be essential, was usually titled *Elkészítés* ‘Preparation’. The more specific communicative purpose of this unit was to linguistically elaborate the activity of instructing, which was only implicitly available before in the ‘Ingredients’ section – by the activation of adequate contextual knowledge. In other words, the ‘Preparation’ section detailed a series of instructions for the reader’s future actions, presented in a scenario-like fashion. In addition to these – although the lessons from the experiment suggest that they are not necessarily required for the successful realisation of the discursive schema of the recipe – various discursive units (i.e. “framework”) could be included at the beginning or at the end of the recipe. The most important among them was the “basic information about the recipe” but a number of other, diverse discursive strategies could also be implemented in the “framework”, for example, the developing of a positive attitude towards the recipe, the closure, saying goodbye or even the recommendation of further recipes.

In contrast to recipes, book reviews showed a clear differentiation in terms of discursive structure based on a systematic analysis of reviews from *moly.hu* and *litera.hu*. At the same time, results of the experiment indicated that the generic discursive schema of evaluation can be described in terms of discursive structure with only few essential features, namely that the text must include a thesis expressing a positive and/or negative evaluative attitude. The genre of amateur book reviews was specified in relation to this generic schema in such a way that, as a genre-marking feature, the amateur book review always began with the so-called star rating. Beyond the expression

of predominantly positive evaluative attitude, certain discursive structural units also express the reviewer's emotional attitude towards the object of the evaluation, typically positive as well. In addition, a shorter narrative may be embedded in the review, most commonly presented as a personal story of the reception of the work evaluated.

In comparison, the discursive structure of professional literary critiques – which suggests a much stronger genre codification – can be characterised by the fact that the critique starts with an introduction from the editorial team of the website. After that, critics typically build up their texts along the lines of thesis–argument. For the most part, the theses are neutral, descriptive statements, i.e. they do not express the evaluative or emotional attitude of the speaker. The evaluative discursive units – which are clearly less numerous than non-evaluative, non-emotional sections – make the critic's positive or negative evaluation much more implicitly accessible. In line with this, the argumentation for the evaluative thesis plays a more significant role in professional critiques than in the book reviews of lay literary enthusiasts.

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