

VOCABULARY LAYERS IN MUSICAL DISCOURSE

Milada Pavlovová

Abstract

The use of specialist discourse in a variety of disciplines has become a central issue of linguistic research. However, even though the world of music has adopted English as a predominant means of communication among musicians, its specific language has remained on the periphery of interest of discourse analysts. As a result, little is known about the genres specific to the domain of music and their language. This paper concentrates on the genre of musical discourse promoting a musical performance, namely the concert notice; it defines this genre from the perspective of text type and describes its lexical aspect, focusing on different stylistic layers. The aim of the study is to show that there is a correlation between the communicative purposes of the concert notice and the vocabulary layers employed in the genre.

Key words

musical discourse, concert notice, vocabulary layers, formal lexis, literary words, musical terms

1 Introduction

Every discipline or profession has its own language and the use of specialist discourse in a variety of disciplines has become a central issue of extensive linguistic research. However, even though the world of music, which is becoming increasingly multicultural and multinational, has adopted English as a predominant means of communication among musicians, its specific language, which relegated Italian to a secondary role, has remained on the periphery of interest of discourse analysts.

As a result, little is known about the language of musical texts and the genres specific to the domain of music. This paper therefore attempts to address the area that has not been investigated previously and make a modest contribution to filling the gap. It focuses on the genre of musical discourse related to promoting a musical performance, namely the concert/programme notice, a text type whose British form differs substantially from its Czech counterpart. It defines the concert notice from the perspective of text type, identifies its communicative purposes and describes the lexical aspect of the genre, focusing on different stylistic layers, particularly on formal lexis represented by literary words and technical terms, including their etymologies and expressivity. The aim of the study is to show that

there is a correlation between the communicative purposes of the concert notice and the vocabulary layers employed in the genre.

In order to draw more reliable conclusions, a corpus comprising 410 samples of concert notice, containing a total of 36,236 words, has been analysed. It represents contemporary British English, with the texts being produced between the years 1993 and 2005.

When compiling the corpus, the primary criterion applied in selecting the samples of the concert/programme notice was the prestige of the promoted musical event (The Proms, The Edinburgh International Festival), the reputation of the performing body (The BBC Symphony Orchestra, The Royal Scottish National Orchestra), and the renown of the venue (The Barbican, The South Bank Centre, St. Martin-in-the-Fields London, The Usher Hall and The Queen's Hall Edinburgh). However, in order to make the corpus more representative and balanced, the samples promoting musical events in other regions, for example Birmingham, Sheffield, and the Orkneys, were incorporated into the collection. The list of all the sources from which the samples have been drawn is listed at the end of this article.

2 Genre definition

The basic analytical framework employed in this paper is the theory of genre and genre analysis. I adopt Swales's (1990: 58) and Bhatia's (1993: 13) view that a crucial genre determinant which plays an important role in structuring the genre is the communicative purpose.

My working definition of a genre for the purposes of this work:

A genre can be defined as a type of discourse (a type of text), spoken or written, occurring in a typical communicative context (in a broad sense)
 with typical content or information (fixed by social conventions)
 with a typical structure and organization, and
 with typical linguistic features (grammar, style, vocabulary)
 that has a communicative purpose. It is the communicative purpose that influences the content, shapes the structure and determines the linguistic features, and, consequently, is the main criterion in distinguishing all the genres.

Every disciplinary community has its own typical set of genres which are used by most of its members in the achievement of the professional objectives. In the domain of music, written genres, such as programme notes, a concert/programme notice, a CD review, a concert review, a performer's profile, or spoken ones,

such as an interview with a performer, conductor–orchestra or teacher–student communication could be identified.

3 Concert notice as a genre

3.1 Communicative purpose

The genre of concert notice is a short written text created

- to notify about forthcoming concerts and opera performances,
- to draw attention and arouse interest of potential audiences,
- to persuade them to buy the tickets and to attend the event.

The communicative goals – to inform, to attract, and to persuade – not only determine the content and influence the structure of the genre, but also put constraints on the choice of lexico-grammatical resources.

3.2 Position in the system of genres

From the perspective of disciplinary-specific genres, the concert notice is one of the three written genres from the field of music related to presenting a musical performance, the other two being a programme note, and a concert review. Each of them concerns a different stage of a musical event, namely its preparation, realisation and consequent evaluation, in other words, the period before, while, and after, providing thus a wider network of disciplinary-specific texts referring to a single event. Moreover, the concert notice is intertextually related in particular to concert reviews, often quoting fragments of positive appraisals of earlier given performances.

3.3 Physical form and format

The concert notice typically appears in brochures, booklets, and leaflets promoting various musical events, be it a season of symphony orchestra or chamber ensemble subscription concerts, music festival programmes, opera houses productions and concert halls or art centres events. These are available at festivals and orchestras' information centres, box offices, public relations offices, various cultural and tourist information centres. With the rapid progress of information technologies they have recently become downloadable also from the Internet.

The space allotted in a booklet to a single programme notice is limited. Consequently, the text is short, the length of most samples out of the 410 analysed

is between 30 and 75 words. This results in a text that is concise, compact, and condensed as the following examples show.

- (1) *Friday 22nd August* *12.30pm(1.30)*
PIANO RECITAL *£5.00(£4.00)*
Brilliant pianist Geoffrey Dancer, who for two consecutive years at the Festival has delighted audiences with his bravura and breathtaking performances, returns with yet another stunning programme consisting of Haydn's Variations in F minor, Brahms' 8 Klavierstücke Op. 76, and Chopin's Polonaise-Fantasie.
(St. Andrew's and St. George's at Festival Time 1997)
- (2) *Thursday 23 September*
This concert sees the welcome return of the renowned French pianist. Cecile Ousset, who, since making her debut at the age of five, has been acclaimed world-wide. Her remarkable touch will be fully displayed in Ravel's Piano Concerto in G which contains some of his sunniest, jazziest and most wistful music. The programme begins with Mozart's Symphony No. 34 and ends with Richard Strauss' brilliant, compelling and life-affirming score, Also Sprach Zarathustra.
(The South Bank Centre September 93)

3.4 Participants

Although written by a programme manager/director of planning as an expert member of a discourse community, the concert notice is a result of a series of more or less conventionalised discursive activities characterised by the involvement of more than one participant. These practices may comprise reading concert reviews or performer's profiles, contacting, negotiating and signing contracts with concert agencies, and finally composing a concert-season or festival programme.

As regards the target audience, the concert notice is aimed primarily at music-lovers and concert-goers. This is reflected in the use of technical vocabulary the knowledge of which on the part of the reader is expected. Nevertheless, so as not to make the text incomprehensible and not to discourage and exclude potential novices from the general public, the terms are not highly specific, with one exception – work titles given in their original languages. This phenomenon is discussed in detail below.

However, from a wider perspective, we could consider the participants as members of a broad discourse community of professional musicians and music-lovers, which complies with Swales's criteria (1990: 21-27): they share the common public purpose of fostering interest in and knowledge of classical music, they can communicate with other members via newsletters or special journals, they share values and at least basic knowledge of music theory and

history, they own special genres to further their goals (e.g. programme notes to spread knowledge about composers and their works, concert reviews to provide feedback on performances), they share special lexis.

4 Lexical aspect of the genre

This part deals with the lexis of the genre, focusing primarily on the stylistic levels; however, origin and expressivity will also be considered.

In English vocabulary three main layers can be distinguished – neutral, formal, and informal. Formal lexis comprises literary words, technical terms, and poetic expressions. The informal layer is represented mainly by colloquial words of two varieties, standard and non-standard, the latter bordering on slang.

4.1 Informal vocabulary

The general character of the genre makes informal vocabulary infrequent in concert notices since the vocabulary seems to be positioned in the more formal part of the spectrum. Still, a few examples occurred in the corpus. They are primarily evaluative expressions with positive connotations. From the pragmatic point of view they may serve as attention-getting devices since they are stylistically marked and, as Leech (1966: 27) notes, any kind of unconventional use of language compels notice:

bravura stuff, chart-topping recording, classy performance, cool poise, a cracker of a concert, fabulous concert, fantastic performanc, fizzy concerto, jazzy music, heavenly duo, this is a must (a rare type of conversion), sensational soprano, sizzler, smash hit (US slang), sparkly march, super-hot concert, pianistic wizardry, zany poetry

4.2 Formal vocabulary

4.2.1 Literary words with positive connotations

4.2.1.1 Nouns and verbs

This is the kind of commendatory lexis which comprises nouns and verbs, mostly abstract words of Graeco-Latin or Romance origin. These loan words enriched English at various periods, entering either directly from Latin or in much larger numbers through French. As a result, there is a large Romance element in the English vocabulary. These are so-called ‘learned’ words which

still preserve the prestige and high status of Latin as the language of scholarship (Hudson 1996: 56). They contribute to the elevated tone of the genre. From the perspective of expressivity, these are inherently positive words, i.e. with built-in expressivity. In the concert notice, they denote positive qualities, aspects of success, a successful person, event or positive feelings. As a result, they can evoke some positive associations or emotions in the reader and trigger their response, contributing thus to the persuasive function of the genre.

Positive quality: *accuracy, agility, apotheosis, artistry, authenticity, beauty, brilliance, bravura, charisma, charm, confidence, delicacy, ebullience, elegance, excellence, exuberance, fervour, finesse, flair, grace, grandeur, inventiveness, lucidity, lustre, lyricism, majesty, mastery, musicality, poise, precision, radiance, splendour, spontaneity, verve, vigour, virtuosity, vivaciousnes*

Success: *achievement, award, fame, miracle, praise, recognition, sensation, success, virtue*

Person: *authority, celebrity, connoisseur, elitegenius, idol, master, prodigy, talent, virtuoso*

Feelings: *acclaim, admiration, affection, bliss, delight, enthusiasm, excitement, ecstasy, exultation, passion, sensitivity, tenderness, warmth*

Event: *celebration, entertainment, festivity, fiesta*

Verbs: *acclaim, appreciate, astonish, award, celebrate, charm, dazzle, delight, enchant, enjoy, hail, highlight, honour, impress, please, recognise, succeed, welcome, win*

4.2.1.2 Adjectives

Another distinctive feature of the concert notice is an unusually high incidence of evaluative and intensifying adjectives. As a rule, they are on the positive side of the scale, of generally high intensity and praise, often representing more emphatic equivalents of *good* and *nice*. They reflect an effort to present both performers and performed works in as desirable a manner as possible, to add to them prestige and approval, or even to glamorise them. This, once again, complies with the purpose of the genre – to attract and persuade the potential audience to attend. Some adjectives have lost their primary meaning and their only function is to intensify the emotional charge of the text. Quirk et al. (1985: 429) divide them into emphasizers with a heightening effect, such as *sheer melodious delight*, and amplifiers which scale upwards from an assumed norm, for example *gargantuan symphony, gigantic forces, massive symphony, superior intellect, superlative song cycle, supreme mastery, titanic symphony, towering masterpiece*.

An enormously wide range of evaluative adjectives (268) found in the genre may be accounted for by an effort to avoid repetition, to fully exploit the whole repertoire of available adjectives and thus make the booklets stylistically of a higher standard. The following are the most frequent among them with the number of occurrences given in brackets:

1. *great* (79), 2. *popular* (43), 3. *exciting, major* (32), 4. *leading* (29), 5. *brilliant* (27), 6. *fine(st)* (25)

4.2.1.3 Adverb submodifiers

An alluring picture, as Leech notes (1966: 129), is painted not only by attributive adjectives but also by unusually expressive and intensifying adverb submodifiers. These comprise degree adverbs describing the extent to which a characteristic holds.

Amplifiers scale upwards from an assumed norm, indicating the degree of intensity (Quirk et al. 1985: 445):

an astonishingly accomplished orchestra, a deeply moving opera, an endlessly inventive series, an eternally youthful setting, a formidably clearsighted pianist, a highly acclaimed performance, a hugely popular opera, an intensely personal symphony, an ultimately moving work.

Emphasizers add to the force of non-gradable adjectives:

a genuinely Spanish overture, a quintessentially English composer

Another semantic group are adverbs of manner – they further specify adjectives, making the passages even more purple:

a brilliantly witty production, a charmingly light-hearted opera, a craftily assembled programme, an emotionally turbulent symphony, a fiendishly virtuosic concerto, a hauntingly beautiful sonata, a heart-stoppingly lovely aria, infectiously joyous music, a meltingly beautiful centre, a morbidly spine-tingling song-cycle, a plushly sumptuous voice, a probingly individual musician, a startlingly original masterpiece, a stompingly exciting programme, a tautly crafted work.

4.2.2 Technical terms

Since the subject-matter of the concert notice is music and its performing, a great deal of musical terminology has occurred in the corpus. However, because of the target audience, the terminology is not highly specific. As the following examples from the corpus show, it confines itself to the names of musical

instruments, musical bodies, styles, types of performers and performances, ways of interpretation as well as terms concerning musical theory and history.

Musical instruments: *accordion, balalaika, bagpipes, bass, bells, brass, celesta, cello, Celtic harp, clarinet, clarsach, conga, cornet, didgeridoo, drum, dulcimer, euphonium, fiddle, flute, fretless string instrument, guitar, harpsichord, horn, lute, mandolin, marimba, oboe, organ, percussion, piano, saxophone, strings, tabla, timpani, trombone, trumpet, tuba, Wagner tuba, viola, violin, whistle, winds,*

Musical ensembles: *brass band, chamber/philharmonic/symphony/wind orchestra, choir, consort, duet, nonet, octet, pipe band, quartet, quintet, recorder ensemble, septet, sextet, trio,*

Musical forms: *aria, bagatelle, bolero, cadenza, cantata, cante jondo, caprice, capriccio, chacony, chorale, divertissement, (double) concerto, duo, fantasia, flamenco, fugue, lieder, madrigal, march, nocturne, opera, oratorio, overture, partita, polka, polonaise, prelude, psalm, requiem, rhapsody, rhumba, scherzo, serenade, song-cycle, sonata, suite, symphony, variation, waltz, zarzuela,*

Performers, authors: *accompanist, accordionist, alto, arranger, associate/chief/guest/principle/visiting conductor, baritone, bass, bassist, cellist, composer-in-association, conductor emeritus/laureate, drummer, fiddler, heldentenor, improviser, librettist, music director, orchestrator, mezzo soprano, organist, percussionist, principle trombone, recitalist, saxophonist, singer, soloist, songwriter, soprano, symphonist, tabla player, tenor, trumpeter,*

Performances: *chamber/debut/subscription concert, open rehearsal, première, Prom, recital,*

Interpretation: *articulation, big voice, dynamic range, evenness of tone, faultless intonation, flawless execution, phenomenal voice, precise phrasing, purity of tone, rhythmic drive, rhythmic precision, vibrant voice, vigorous attack*

Musical theory: *beat, chord, harmony, major, minor, note, rhythm,*

It may be interesting to mention the etymology of a few of the above-mentioned terms.

4.2.2.1 The diachronic perspective

Concurrently with the development of the art of music, musical life, and new concepts in music, the vocabulary was needed to denote new facts of extralinguistic reality. Besides using domestic words, a number of terms were borrowed from other languages. As a result, musical terminology is largely of Italian origin, music being the branch of art for which Italians were famous. However, many

words entered English from French or via French. Other European languages contributed as well.

The following section is an attempt at describing etymologies of some of the terms mentioned above. It is based mainly on the information acquired from *Online Etymology Dictionary*, *Chambers Etymological English Dictionary*, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*, and *The New Penguin Dictionary of Music* (for details, see References).

Germanic (Anglo-Saxon) origin

Fiddle – from Old English *fithle*, probably from Medieval Latin *vitula* “a stringed instrument”, perhaps related to *Vitula*, the Roman goddess of joy and victory, or from *vitulari* “be joyful”. The word has been relegated to colloquial usage by its more proper cousin, *violin* (cf. German *Fiedel*, hence Czech *fidlovat*, *fidlovačka*). This process was encouraged by such expressions as *fiddlestick*, in the 15th century meaning “the bow of a fiddle”, while in the early 17th century it shifted to “nonsense”.

Freelance (musician) – coined by Sir Walter Scott in 1820, “a medieval mercenary warrior”, its figurative sense, “a self-employed person”, is recorded in 1864.

Score – from OE *scoru* “twenty”, the name of a printed piece of music comes from the practice of connecting the related staves by “scores” of lines marking off the bars, the term dates from 1701. Czech *partitura* comes from Italian *partitura* denoting a copy of a piece of music which shows in ordered form all the parts allotted to the various instruments.

Sharp – from OE *scearp* “cutting, keen, sharp”. The musical meaning “half step above a given tone” is from the late 16th century.

Whistle – from OE *hwistle*, of imitative origin, “tubular musical instrument”.

Italian origin

Concert – entered English via Italian, ultimately from Latin *concertare* “to bring into agreement” or from *concentare* “to sing together”. The sense of “a public musical performance” is from the late 17th century. Until that time music was not the centre of social attention, rather, it used to accompany other social activities, such as church services and ceremonies, entertainments at courts and in taverns. Concerts in the modern sense then emerged from such performing traditions during the 17th century.

Concerto – a composition for a solo instrument accompanied by an orchestra. It was borrowed in the early 18th century directly from Italian as a musical term, hence the still occasionally occurring irregular plural *concerti*. Czech, similarly to German, has just one equivalent *koncert* for both *concert* and *concerto*.

Opera – comes from Latin plural of *opus* “work”. It is an abbreviation of *opera in musica*, referring to a sung drama which originated in Florence towards the close of the 16th century. *Soap opera* is recorded in 1939, as a disparaging reference to daytime radio dramas originally sponsored by soap manufacturers.

Pianoforte – generally shortened to *piano*, known originally as the *gravicembalo col piano e forte*, i.e. “harpichord with soft and loud”, so-called by its inventor Cristofori because of the ability via dampers to vary the volume of the tone.

Sonata – means “sounded”, i.e. played on an instrument as opposed to *cantata* – “sung”. Originally, in the 16th century, it meant any piece of instrumental music. Its meaning was narrowed by the mid-18th century and applied to works in three or four movements, either for piano or for one or two players accompanied by piano.

Viola – Italian word *viola* can be traced to Medieval Latin *vitula*, “a stringed instrument”, perhaps from *Vitula*, Roman goddess of joy, or from *vitulari* “be joyful”.

Violin – from *violino*, a diminutive of *viola*.

French origin

Many terms entered English vocabulary from French or via French. OF and MF stand for Old French and Medieval French, respectively.

Baton – originally “a staff used as a weapon”, in the late 16th century also “a staff carried as a symbol of office”, in this sense used by the person responsible for music in the Christian church. As musical works became more rhythmically complex, it was moved up and down to indicate the beat, acting as an early form of baton. In instrumental music, however, conducting was taken up by a harpsichord player or the principal violinist and it was not until the mid-19th century that a conductor, the person who did not play an instrument during the performance, became the norm in the orchestra and the *baton* acquired its musical sense of a conductor’s wand.

Compose – from OF *composer*; “put together”, from Latin *componere*, its musical sense “write a piece of music” dates from the late 15th century since the profession of a composer in the modern sense did not exist in the Middle Ages. Rather than composed, music was the result of improvisation and creating music had no greater importance than performing it. Authors remained mostly anonymous.

Cor anglais – “English horn”, neither English nor a horn, but an alto oboe. Due to folk etymology, its name is probably a corruption of *cor anglé*.

Debut – from *débuter*; “make the first stroke at billiards”, used in a figurative sense “to appear in public for the first time”.

Ensemble – from MF *ensemble* “all the parts of a thing taken together”, from Latin *in simul* “at the same time”. Its musical sense of “a group of musicians” dates from the 19th century.

Lute – from OF *lut*, derived from Arabic *al-'ud*, “the wood”.

Nocturne – “pertaining to night”, a composition of a dreamy character, invented in 1814 by an Irish composer John Field who wrote many of them, later adopted, developed, and popularized by Chopin. From Latin *nocturnus*, “occurring in the night”.

Repertoire – from French *répertoire* and Latin *repertorium* “inventory”, it entered English in the middle of the 19th century, used side by side with *repertory*.

Greek origin

Baritone – from Greek *barytonos*, “deep-toned”. The meaning “singer having such a deep voice” is from the early 19th c. As a type of brass band instrument, it dates from 1949.

Chorus – from Greek *choros*, “a ring dance, a band of dancers or singers”, the meaning of “a choir” is first attested in 1656.

Music – from Greek *mousike techne* “art of Muses” through Latin *musica* and OF *musique*.

Orchestra – from Greek *orchestra*, “a semicircular space where the chorus of dancers performed”. The meaning of “a group of musicians performing at a concert or opera” is first recorded in 1720. *Orchestration* was borrowed in 1864 from French and *to orchestrate*, “to compose or arrange music for an orchestra” is a backformation from 1880.

Organ – derived from *organon*, “a musical instrument, implement”. Applied vaguely in late OE to musical instruments, its sense narrowed towards the close of the 14th century to the modern musical instrument, still known by that name.

Symphony – from *symphonia*, “harmony, concert”, through OF *symphonie*. It has had several musical meanings over the centuries. In the late 16th century it denoted “music in parts”, in the 17th century an overture to an opera, since the late 18th century a large-scale orchestral composition, usually in several movements, in the shape of a sonata for an orchestra.

German origin

Heldentenor – “heroic tenor”

Lied, Lieder – in the non-German-speaking world, the type of lyric song with piano sung in German, dubiously applied also to songs not in German (Kennedy 1996: 233)

Spanish origin

Guitar – the name reached England several times in reference to various guitar-like instruments, the modern word is from Spanish *guitarra*, from Arab *qitar* and Greek *kithara*.

Latin origin

Festival – from Middle Latin *festivus* “of a church holiday”, *festival* is first recorded as a noun in the late 16th century. It came to be applied to a series of performances of music, or plays etc. Its first strictly musical use was the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy in 1698; however, the oldest English festival in the true sense is the Three Choirs Festival first held in 1715 and to these days alternating between the cities of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester.

Major – from *major*, comparative of *magnus*, “large, great”, used in music of scales and chords since 1694 on notion of an interval a semi-tone greater than the minor.

Minor – from *minor*, “lesser, smaller”, the musical sense is from 1694.

Percussion – from Latin *percussio*, *percutere*, “a striking, a blow, to strike”. First reference to musical instruments is in the late 18th century, *a percussionist* dates from 1950.

Requiem – “mass for repose of the soul of the dead”, from the accusative of *requies*, “rest”, the first word of the Mass for the Dead in the Latin liturgy, *Requiem aeternam*.

Other

Drum – from Middle Dutch *tromme*, probably of imitative origin, not common before 1575.

Flat – from Old Norse *flatr* “flat”, musical sense “below true pitch” is from the 16th century, as well as the sign which lowers the pitch by a semitone.

The terms borrowed from different languages denote new concepts and phenomena. In the course of centuries they have become more or less assimilated and are not regarded as foreign any more. Foreign words, by contrast, neither belong to the English vocabulary, nor are they registered in dictionaries. Their occurrence in the concert notice is discussed below.

4.2.3 Non-English vocabulary

The concert notice exhibits a peculiar tendency not so common in Czech musical texts – to give the titles of compositions, the names of musical bodies, concert halls, competition prizes, educational and other institutions in their original languages. To indicate their foreign nature and exclusiveness, they are

generally typed in italics. Since foreign words are always stylistically marked, with respect to their frequency in the concert notice they represent a separate stylistic layer. A range of languages has been identified in our material: Latin (e.g. *Te Deum, Missa Solemnis, Psalmus Hungaricus, Cantus Arcticus; Camerata Academica*), German (e.g. *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Die schöne Müllerin, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Das Knaben Wunderhorn, Eine kleine Nachtmusik, Das Lied von der Erde; Staatskapelle Dresden; Hochschule, Konzerthaus; Deutsche Schallplattenkritik award*), French (e.g. *Le Sacre du Printemps, Le Bal Masqué, Prelude à l'après-midi d'un faune, Ma mère l'oye; Ballets Russes, Opera National de Paris; Salle d'UNESCO; Grand Prix du Disque*), Italian (e.g. *Pagliacci, Messa a Quatro Voci alla Capella, Le Nozze di Figaro, Sul Ponte di Hiroshima; Arena di Verona*), Spanish (e.g. *La Verbena de la Paloma, El Diablo Suelto; Orquestra Simfonica de Barcelona*), Russian (e.g. *Ibo; the Bolshoi Opera*), Dutch (e.g. *Concertgebouw*), and even Finnish (*Ilmatar Ilman Impi, Dimman Lätär*) and Czech (*Má vlast, Vltava, Sarka, Mládi*). Since this clearly violates both Grice's maxim of quantity, providing very little information, and the maxim of manner, supplying the information in rather an obscure way, which contradicts the purpose of the genre, we can only hypothesize about the function of the foreign expressions. On the one hand, non-English titles can add authenticity to the genre and express respect for the author. On the other hand, as Leech (1966: 63) notes, such practice may be attributed to the nature of the envisaged audience differing in educational and social standing as well as occupational and leisure interests. In our case, it would be either a professional musician or a concert-goer and music lover well-versed in music or at least familiar with the work titles, or, alternatively, a person proficient in several languages. This practice, however, may appear somewhat snobbish, discourage those less competent in the field, and exclude them from discourse community. In this respect, non-English vocabulary in the concert notice can be considered a special layer of technical lexis.

In sociolinguistics, shifting between one language and another is referred to as code-switching or code-mixing. It mainly concerns bilingualism and a spoken mode; nevertheless, we can apply the theory to a written mode as well. According to Hudson (1996: 55), speakers/writers attribute different social values to different codes and, consequently, consider use of one code more appropriate in the given situation than the other. Switching to another language then may have a number of reasons, such as showing social respect, communicating affiliation to a particular social group, associating the language with particular kinds of situation or culture, or demonstrating the language knowledge for prestigious reasons. Code-switching in the concert notice can then be motivated by any

of them, whether showing respect for a composer and his culture or assuming “membership” in a musical discourse community on the part of the addressee.

5 Comparison with Czech

In Czech cultural environment a tendency to glamorise and exaggerate is perceived as something inappropriate, which can only be explained in terms of cross-cultural differences, particularly different cultural attitudes to such values as modesty, sincerity, and truth. Wierzbicka (1991: 103) considers modern Anglo-American culture more “pragmatic” in its attitude to truth than European culture. This is reflected, for example, in the concept of “a white lie”. In European culture, “it is bad to say what is not true, it is good to say what is true”, whereas Anglo-American attitude to truth appears to be more pragmatic: “it is usually bad to say what is not true, sometimes it is good to say what is not true if nothing bad can happen because of this”.

Czech concert notices differ from British ones substantially in that they only present featuring musicians and compositions without any promoting commentary probably following the belief that their names and titles speak for themselves. If such commentaries do appear, although it happens very rarely, the language, in contrast to flowery English, is rather prosaic. There are some hints, however, that this common practice has been changing recently, obviously as a result of new marketing strategies and commercialism asserting itself also in culture.

6 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the vocabulary of the concert notice, particularly formal literary words contribute considerably to the overall positive character of the genre and its persuasive power while informal lexis serves as an attention-getting device. Technical terms, on the other hand, provide the informative function of the genre. This entirely complies with the communicative purposes of the concert notice – to inform, to attract and to persuade. As a result, we can claim that the analysis of the lexical aspect of the concert notice shows that there is a significant correlation between the communicative purposes of the concert notice and the layers of vocabulary employed in the genre.

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