

THE CURRICULUM VITAE AND THE MOTIVATIONAL LETTER: A RHETORICAL AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: The paper reports on a study intended to tap into the characteristics of the Hungarian culture in an attempt to develop intercultural competence in the Hungarian English as a foreign language (EFL) context. It focuses on exploring two related genres, the curriculum vitae (CV) and the motivational letter (ML) in terms of their rhetorical structure with the hope of gaining insight into the cultural differences of English and Hungarian writing patterns (Kaplan, 1987; Hinds, 1987). The paper first proposes a theory-based analytical model for the rhetorical analysis of CVs. Then, in an empirical pilot study, it tests the applicability of the model for the analysis of CVs written by Hungarian learners of English in order to describe the rhetorical structure of the texts. In addition, it depicts the rhetorical structure of the motivational letters attached to the CVs applying Bhatia's (1993) analytical model. The study also examines whether there are cultural characteristics of the parent culture manifested in the EFL texts on the basis of cultural value orientation studies (Hofstede, 1991; Hall 1973; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1996). Based on the analysis of a small corpus of CVs and MLs written by Hungarian learners of EFL and a questionnaire filled in by the learners on their experience of CV and ML writing, the present exploratory study intends to increase the marketability of school-leavers by (1) generating hypotheses regarding the CV and ML writing practices of Hungarian students of EFL for further research; (2) investigating if the differences between the native and the target language writing patterns are represented in the corpus; and (3) indicating the pedagogical implications of the need to raise EFL students' and teachers' awareness of the two genres' cultural differences.

Keywords: discourse analysis, rhetorical structure, cultural dimensions, curriculum vitae, motivational letter

1 Introduction

The present paper is the first step towards a wider-ranging study on the development of intercultural skills in foreign language education. As such, it will contribute to a triangulation procedure which intends to establish the cultural characteristics of Hungarian society in contrast with Anglo-American cultural traits. It is my hope in the long run, first, to distinguish those cultural differences between the two culture groups that may cause the most frequent intercultural misunderstandings, and second, to develop language tasks that prepare future intercultural communicators for these recurrent breakdowns.

One possible area of misunderstanding may arise during the job-hunting process. From a *discourse* point of view, a job application involves writing a curriculum vitae (CV) and a motivational letter (ML) in order to promote the applicant and his or her reasons for applying for a specific position (Seely, 2005). From a contemporary Hungarian *sociological* point of view, it usually means applying in English, since 57% of job advertisements in Hungary require a high level of English language knowledge (Híves, 2006). From an *intercultural* point of view, applicants thus step onto a field littered with potential intercultural land-mines, given that not only the linguistic tools, but also the schemata and thought patterns of different languages may be different (Kaplan, 1966, 1987). Since the applicants' success lies mainly in their competence to solve the arising intercultural conflicts, the present paper aims to

highlight the fact that it is essential in teaching and learning CV and ML writing to recognize, understand, and know how to act upon cultural differences – apart from linguistic ones – to increase the marketability of the future workforce in an internationalized job market (Falkné, 2000).

2 Theoretical background

To be able to teach and perform text production in professional communication, a reliable way of categorizing texts is needed. However influential Swales' genre definition has been in analyzing different text-types¹ (Bhatia, 1993; Károly, 2007), his and Bhatia's (1993) research mostly focused on restricted types of genre, in a limited number of languages. Swales worked with academic research English, whereas Bhatia dealt with the written genres of the business and legal world and highlighted the cultural influences of the parent culture in EFL writing (1993). Other researchers in the field have also restricted their work to special aspects of selected genres (Zhu, 2000; Dyer & Friederich, 2002; DeKay, 2006; Ostler, 1987; Liu, 2007; Davis & Muir, 2003; Bowen, Sapp & Sargsyan, 2006). Károly (2007) draws attention to the fact that the genres of the different communicative contexts lack a systematized rhetorical analysis and that a unified theory of rhetoric that overarches cultures and languages is not yet available.

It could be due to this hiatus that despite its everyday presence in professional communication, there seems to be an unfortunate lack of attention paid to the discourse structural and linguistic characteristics of the curriculum vitae. For example, Bhatia (1993) considers the CV only as the necessary attachment to a job application letter and does not include it in his rhetorical analysis at all, and Connor (1996) mentions it as a separate text-type only tangentially, in the form of a description of an incident (p.144). In this, a teacher of English from Hungary in 1992 had to write a CV in a TESL course in Prague, the Czech Republic. The highly competent English-speaking writer surprised the native English-speaking instructors by producing a completely different format and structure from what they had expected.

Research on the genre of motivational letters is also comparatively neglected, though Bhatia (1993) has dealt with it under the expression 'job application letters' quite extensively. According to him (1993, chapter 3), the genre of the job application letter belongs to the larger category of promotional literature and is similar to advertisements, company brochures and leaflets. The aim of the job application letter is to elicit a response, namely an interview for the applicant. To accomplish this, the applicant has to establish his or her credentials by offering "a favorable, positive and relevant description of the abilities of the candidate in terms of the specifications or requirements of the job that has been advertised" (p.60). The description should not present all the minutiae, but only "highlight the most essential and the most important aspects of the candidature" (p.60). If Swales' genre definition (1990) and Bhatia's work on promotional literature (1993) is combined, the definition of the genre of the motivational letter may be formulated as follows: the motivational letter comprises a set of communicative events related to the job application procedure whose shared set of communicative purposes is to elicit a response from and establish communication with the audience, the employer or its representatives, and persuade it to choose the applicant at the

¹ *Text-type* and *genre* are used here as identical terms for a group of written events based on the usage of Bhatia (1993).

end of the selection process. The rationale of persuasion influences and constrains the choice of content and style, shaping the schematic structure of the discourse type. Bhatia's work (1993) on motivational letters concerned itself with setting up this schematic structure of the genre – which is similar to the move-step analysis proposed by Swales for research article introductions (1990) – on the basis of a 200-item motivational letter corpus.

Nevertheless, to teach and perform text production in professional communication, it is not enough to know the different text-types. Kaplan (1966, 1987) has already shown that the writers' original cultural thought patterns are most likely to be reflected in their EFL writings as well. Bhatia also reports on the phenomenon of the *nativization* of job application letters in South Asia, where Asian cultural characteristics surface in foreign language writing in both style and content. The phenomenon of the transfer of cultural characteristics is similar to that of first language (L1) influences on second language (L2) performance, and may be rooted in the differences between the cultural value orientations of cultures. The paradigms drawn up by Hofstede (1991), Hall (1973), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1996) are derived from the idea that cultures, nations, or any kind of group of people may be distinguished on the basis of their common value patterns. The general questions of mankind – that is, how to handle hierarchy, power, identity, gender roles, time, space, rules, and uncertainty – produce different answers in different groups as a result of their different value systems. For example, the question of hierarchy within a society can be answered differently along a continuum of the so-called power distance, or the answers to the question of the importance of identity can create a continuum of individualism versus collectivism. The answers form a pattern of interweaving dimensions for each culture, resulting in a cultural profile which represents the basic values specific to that culture. The value system might also be reflected in the behavior of the members of the given community, and the cultural profile may manifest itself in a tendency to behave in a certain way in the given group. The profiles are not absolute – they are useful only when two or more cultures are compared to each other and they do not predict each and every individual's reactions in all circumstances. However, there seems to be a tendency for members of a particular group to communicate and behave in similar ways in similar situations. Differences in the behavioral tendencies of the interacting participants might be used to predict circumstances of possible conflict and situations where the differing values might lead to misunderstandings (Utley, 2000; Buckley, 2000; Hofstede, 1991).

Since expressing oneself through language is a form of behavior, it may be assumed that cultural values might also be reflected in the language, the linguistic tools and the text production processes and products of specific groups. As mentioned earlier, Kaplan has pointed out that there might be a cultural transfer from one's first culture (C1) to his or her other (second) culture (C2) apart from the linguistic transfer from one's first language (L1) to his or her other (second) language (L2). Therefore, it seems reasonable to take cultural thought patterns and value differences into consideration when teaching and researching text production in a foreign language. Though there may be a danger of an ecological fallacy, an assumption that inferences can be made for a group based on individual characteristics because the individuals of the group exhibit the same characteristics as the group at large (Dahl, 2005), it is the responsibility of the researcher to draw attention to the unavoidable individual differences while highlighting the central tendencies.

3 Methods

To teach and produce CVs and MLs in EFL in a cross-culturally sensitive way and increase the marketability of school leavers and other job applicants, it is important to explore whether there are differences in the writing patterns of the two cultures. Due to the lack of empirical research on CVs in general, the research design was split into a theoretical and an empirical part. In the first part, a CV template was established in order to make the analysis of the CVs of the participants of the study possible. The second, empirical pilot phase consisted of the compilation of a corpus of CVs and MLs written by Hungarian EFL students, so that it could be analyzed with the help of the CV template put forward in the theoretical part on one hand, and with the help of the analytical tool developed for the description of the rhetorical structure of MLs by Bhatia (1993) on the other hand. Finally, the cultural dimensions put forward by Hofstede (1991), Hall (1973), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1996) were consulted to see if any cultural influence may constitute a pattern in the texts produced by the participants, so that acquisition of these genres could be made more comprehensible both to teachers and learners of EFL in Hungary. Thus the results of the pilot study may serve to (1) generate hypotheses about the CV and ML writing practices of Hungarian EFL students, (2) test the applicability of the CV template, (3) gain insight into whether there is any cultural transfer present in the products and the processes of the participants from parent culture to target culture, and (4) forward practices of teaching CV and ML writing in a foreign language.

3.1 Theoretical part: developing a CV template

As the literature review revealed, there seems to be a lack of substantial empirical research on the genre of the CV. Thus, a set of sample CVs was collected, which consists of both Hungarian and English CVs, so that any cultural differences in the genre might be detected. The set was compiled in order to make an attempt at describing the generic characteristics of this genre, and to propose a template. The resources chosen were assumed to be the most frequently used both by the EFL writers and the teachers of this genre in Hungary. Sources included printed materials, such as English language textbooks (Naunton, 2000; Kay & Jones, 2001; Timár, 2004) and a guidebook on writing in English (Seely, 2005), two English dictionaries (Hornby, 1995; Pickett, 2000); Hungarian and English materials available on the internet (profession.hu; oneletrajzmintak.hu; job-center.hu; jegyzetek.hu; europass.cedefop.eu; and frissdiplomas.hu); The Hungarian National Curriculum (NAT 2007); the Common European Framework of Reference (Järvinen, 2006); and the habits and experiences of teachers of Hungarian Language and Literature (Veszelszki, 2006; personal communication with teachers).

Based on the analysis of Hungarian and English documents, two types of CV structure could be identified in Hungary today, corresponding to the two languages. One is the traditional Hungarian letter-format CV, which still forms the basis of instruction for the genre of the CV in Hungarian taught in Hungarian Language and Literature classes (Veszelszki, 2006; personal communication with teachers). This 'Hungarian type' represents the self of the writer in a holistic manner with personal data, education and work experience related to the reader in the form of a chronological narrative. In addition, using the reader- vs. writer-responsible classification of Hinds (1987), in these texts it is the reader who is responsible for finding the relevant information that he or she is looking for within the text. The other type is the English CV format written in English, the main organizing principle of which is the

relevance to the current job posting, where the self is shown from a certain angle only, and it is the writer who is responsible for listing all the relevant information grouped according to function. The information is presented in a dense table-format. This is the commonly required type in the labor market context, written both in Hungarian and in English.

The essential structural differences between the two types have long been regarded in Hungary as being representative of the cultural differences between the Hungarian and the Anglo-American cultures. The term ‘American type CV’ has been in use in Hungarian for quite some time referring to the table format CV structure. The fact, however, that even CVs written in Hungarian are to follow the Anglo-American format, style and content seems to reflect a change in the Hungarian conventions, most probably due to the influences of western-style labor market expectations. This is not a unique phenomenon as Bowen, Sapp and Sargsyan (2006) report on a similar process in Russia.

On the basis of the analysis of Hungarian and English internet and printed materials, drawing heavily on Swales’ wording (1990), the following culturally neutral definition of the genre of the CV may be proposed: it comprise a set of communicative events of the job application procedure whose shared set of communicative purposes is to inform the intended audience, the employers or their representatives, about the events of one’s life described according to specific characteristics, and whose schematic structural constraints in content and style are not independent of the language and cultural environment of realization. The CV template drafted below for use in the empirical part of the study includes personal data, relevant work and educational experience for the posting, relevant skills for the position applied for, and other categories presented in a table format (Figure 1).

CV TEMPLATE based on the reviewed samples
Personal information
Name
Address
Phone number
Date of birth
Email address
Nationality
Work experience
Dates of work experience
Names of employers
Responsibilities
Occupation/position
Education and training
Dates of education and training
Names of institutions
Subjects/majors
Skills (general and others)

Figure 1. The CV template proposed on the basis of the reviewed documents.

3.2 Empirical part: the CV and ML writing practices of Hungarian EFL students

The empirical part of the study is qualitative and descriptive in nature, and its main purpose is to generate hypotheses regarding the CV and ML writing practices of Hungarian EFL students. As Bowen, Sapp and Sargsyan (2006) say “case study research is often used to generalize back to theory (Yin, 1984) or inform practice in similar situations” (p.130). By providing in-depth descriptions of one particular context, information for a wider decision-

making perspective, such as curriculum planning or teaching practices, may be made available (Hays, 2004).

In order to generate hypotheses concerning the CV and ML writing practices of Hungarian EFL learners, a pilot study was designed. Apart from the main aim of generating hypotheses, it also tested the applicability of the CV template put forward in the theoretical part of the study, and mapped the rhetorical and possible cultural characteristics of CVs and MLs written in English by Hungarian EFL students. Thus, the current pilot study was guided by three research questions:

1. What kind of experience do Hungarian learners of EFL have in CV and ML writing in general?
2. What kind of rhetorical structure do the CVs and MLs written in English by Hungarian EFL students have?
3. Are there any specific cultural characteristics identifiable in the CVs and MLs written in English by Hungarian EFL students?

3.3 Context, participants and data collection

The questions were investigated with the help of a group of 11th grade (17-year-old) boys (4) and girls (5), who were at an upper-intermediate level of English in a Budapest secondary school. Their second language (L2) is German, and they had been learning English as their third language for 10-12 years as part of their compulsory education. As an informal short interview with their Hungarian Language and Literature teacher revealed (personal communication), the participants had already learnt about the characteristics of CVs explicitly in their mother tongue in the 10th grade, as well as at the beginning of the 11th, that is, two to three months prior to the present investigation. Instruction included the traditional Hungarian narrative-type CV, the American table-format-type résumés (in Hungarian) and the Europass² CV (also in Hungarian). In the foreign language classes neither CV nor ML writing had been practiced. The reason given for this was that they are not compulsory elements in the curriculum (personal communication).

To answer the first research question, exploring whether Hungarian learners of EFL have any experience in CV and ML writing, and if yes, what kind, a questionnaire was designed and implemented to collect the relevant information. The first part referred to personal data, years of language learning, and whether the participant had ever written a CV or a ML, and if yes, on what occasion. The second part asked whether the participant had learnt about how CVs should be written in Hungarian, in English, or in any other languages. After each language there was an open-ended question inquiring about what exactly the participant had learnt about CV writing in that language. The third section of the questionnaire asked for similar information about ML writing, namely, whether they had learnt anything about it and if yes, what exactly. The questionnaire was also a useful way to check whether the Hungarian Language and Literature teachers' statements harmonized with the students' answers about learning these genres. The questionnaires were distributed among the students after the writing task and were filled in as a home assignment.

² The Europass CV is one of five documents comprising the Europass which was established by the European parliament and the Council in 2004 in order to promote a single transparency framework for qualifications and competencies.

To answer the second and third research questions, a task was designed and administered in order to be able to build a corpus consisting of CVs and MLs written in English by Hungarian EFL students in response to an authentic job advertisement during a regular 45-minute English lesson. I conducted the activity with the students, but, as they did not know me, their teacher was also present during the lesson to keep the atmosphere more familiar for the participants, thus ensuring that anxiety would play as little a role as possible in their performance during the task. The task used a classified advertisement adapted from an online job posting looking for flight attendants for an airline company (see Appendix) The English text was kept intact as much as possible. Some selection criteria presented in the ad, such as body height and work experience, were left out to ensure that the participants can meet the requirements and complete the task. Instructions were written and explained in Hungarian to prevent any misunderstanding of the task. The use of dictionaries was allowed. Collaboration of the participants was not permitted, but using an imagined character instead of their real self was given as an option. This was done in order to alleviate the stress of sharing private information, or of any other psychological pressure caused by participating in an unfamiliar task. One student of the group who was absent at the time of the assignment completed the task at home. His task sheets were collected later, but analyzed together with the rest of the corpus. The tasks were collected immediately after the lesson.

4 Data analysis

The questionnaire data were examined for central tendencies, and in the case of the open-ended questions, for extreme cases. The analysis of the CVs was carried out by comparing the structural discourse characteristics of the CVs written by the students to the CV template established in the theoretical part of the study (section 3.1). The MLs were split into sentences or clauses and each categorized using Bhatia's job application move-step template (1993) which can be seen in Figure 2.

MOVE 1	Establishing credentials
MOVE 2	Introducing candidature
Part 1	offering candidature
Part 2	essential detailing of candidature
Part 3	indicating the value of the candidature
MOVE 3	Offering incentives
MOVE 4	Enclosing documents
MOVE 5	Soliciting response
MOVE 6	Using pressure tactics
MOVE 7	Ending politely

Figure 2. The seven steps of the job application letter according to Bhatia (1993).

A sample analysis together with Bhatia's sample letter and analysis are demonstrated in Figure 3. The two columns on the left show the moves and the split up sample letter from Bhatia's corpus. On the right, one of the MLs can be seen from the current corpus, with the original mistakes uncorrected, in sections representing the moves that could be identified in the letter. The order of the moves follows the letter's structure, thus it is not the same as that of Bhatia's sample. The sample analysis neatly reflects where, in what way, and to what extent the English and the Hungarian EFL corpora differ.

Moves	Bhatia (1993)	ML1	Moves
Introducing candidature offering candidature	I wish to make application for a lectureship in the Department of English at this University.	'My name is Christina Kis. I was born in 1988, so I'm 19 years old.	Introducing candidature offering candidature
Establishing credentials	I have a Ph.D. in English from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, where I studied under such distinguished scholars as Professors K.R. Sisson and P. Hogg. I also have an M.A. in English from Napoli University.	As you can see I'm not enough old to have a diploma yet, but I study now at the University in Budapest.	essential detailing of candidature
essential detailing of candidature	I have taught English at a number of American and Canadian educational institutions, including Purdue and Oklahoma universities. I have also taught at Lohis College in Tehran, Iran, where I had experience in teaching English as a second language. Currently I am on the staff of Riyadh university in Saudi Arabia.	In the summer I worked in Italy on the beach (I sailed the sunbeds and wathever), and I've swum 15 years. I've won on the country champion	essential detailing of candidature
indicating value of candidature	I have written about ten research articles in the last seven years, all of which have been published in scholarly journals. I have also written two books, one on Shakespeare and the other on the teaching of writing, which are being published by Guelph University and will be out in a few months.	so I can say, that I can swim.	indicating the value of the candidature
Offering incentives	My specialty is Shakespeare and Renaissance drama in general, but I am also qualified to teach a wide variety of other courses, including the Novel, Poetry, Composition, writing and teaching of writing and ESL.	(I attach the diplom of the swimming)	Enclosing documents
Enclosing documents	I hope this letter of 'application' will clarify some of the information on the enclosed C.V., which outlines my qualifications, experience and research interests.	Before this job I've passed an inter-mediate-level exam (c) in german and after the job have I in Italian too.	essential detailing of candidature
Using pressure tactics	I am required to give notice to Riyadh in early April and therefore look forward to hearing from you soon.	And because I languages, people and work like, I think that this job would be perfect to me. And because I will love my job I think I meet the requirements.	indicating the value of the candidature
Soliciting response	Since I do not have a telephone, I will be happy to call you should a telephone discussion become appropriate.	I really hope, that you will choose me for this job.	Using pressure tactics
Ending politely	Thank you very much.	I'm looking forward to get your answerletter.	Soliciting response/ Ending politely
Sincerely yours, signature		Yours faithfully, Christina Kis	Sincerely yours, signature
		Please find enclosed my: Curriculum vitae, some dimptoms of swim, may exams (language)	Enclosing documents

Figure 3. Sample text analysis with moves compared to Bhatia's example (1993, p.60).

Apart from looking for information on the general CV and ML writing practices of Hungarian EFL students and the rhetorical structures of their CVs and MLs, I also intended to see whether the students' own cultural characteristics was an influence in the collected target language corpus, which would answer the third research question of the study. The writing patterns of the CVs and MLs were investigated with the help of the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1991), Hall (1973), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1996). The corpus was analyzed for eight cultural dimensions which formed the basis of a questionnaire on cultural differences (Groniewsky, 2005) that I have used in other research, and therefore I hoped to get

comparable data from different sources. Figure 4 shows the eight value dimensions with a short description of each extreme pole of the continuum in question.

High power distance the emotional distance that separates subordinates from bosses is large (Hofstede, 1991)	Small power distance the emotional distance that separates subordinates from bosses is small (Hofstede, 1991)
Individualism the interest of the individual prevails over the interest of the group (Hofstede, 1991)	Collectivism the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individual (Hofstede, 1991)
Masculinity pertains to societies in which gender roles are clearly distinct, men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life; (Hofstede, 1991)	Femininity pertains to societies in which social gender roles overlap, both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede, 1991)
Uncertainty-avoidance the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede, 1991)	Uncertainty tolerance conversely, the other extreme tolerates uncertainty fairly well. (Hofstede, 1991)
Short term orientation the values of taking the initiative, seeking risks, tolerating changeability, and being sensitive to social trends in consumption (Hofstede and Pedersen, 2002)	Long term orientation. personal steadiness, stability, protecting one's face, tradition, and persistence. (Hofstede and Pedersen, 2002)
Polychronic time society tolerates multi-tasking fairly well, deadlines are prone to be flexible, and the motto "work to live" describes it quite adequately (Hall, 1973)	Monochronic time cultures prefer to do one thing at a time, time management is extremely important, and wasting time is one of the major negative values. In addition, punctuality, efficiency, and the motto "live to work" are highly favored (Hall, 1973)
High context dependent uses non-verbal cues extensively, belonging to in- and out-groups is important, and leaders supposed to have personal responsibility (Hall, 1973)	Low context dependence favors direct verbal messages and a power distribution where personal responsibility is reduced (Hall, 1973)
Universalism laws and rights are to be observed by everyone (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1996)	Particularism laws and rights are for the chosen ones and people depend on the personal or family relationship between the people involved in a particular situation (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1996)

Figure 4. The extreme poles of eight cultural dimension continua. (Hofstede, 1991; Hofstede and Pedersen, 2002; Hall, 1973; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1996).

The reliability of analysis was ensured by using two coders: I myself acted as the first one, bringing the Hungarian cultural perspective and viewpoint into the analysis. The second coder's nationality and parent culture was American, and he or she was a native English speaker. It was thought to be important to employ someone with a different cultural background in order to avoid researcher and ethnocentric bias, as well as to see whether there are significant differences of analysis between coders of different cultures using the same set of theoretical criteria.

5 Results and discussion

5.1 Questionnaires

The results of the questionnaires are in harmony with the oral communication of the participants' teacher concerning whether the students have learnt about CV writing or not. The nine participants' average number of years learning English was 7.1. One had to write a CV when he applied to the secondary school where the study took place. Four out of the 8

students said that they had learnt about CV writing in Hungarian. Among the issues learnt, they mentioned the different types of CVs; some components to be included such as family, schooling and work experience; the fact that interests and language should be also included; that the American one is the most popular; and, finally, that you also had to include why you were writing your CV. One student said she had learnt reversed chronological CV writing in English (i.e., starting with the present features), but the others said they had not learnt any CV writing in English, nor in any other foreign languages. When asked about ML writing, only one student said he had written a ML on the occasion of the entrance examination, but the others had never ever written a ML. This one student in addition said that a ML should be about the reason for applying for the job. The other students had never written or learnt anything about MLs in any language. When asked about the difficulties of the writing task in general, they mentioned the lack of practice and experience as the most problematic issue. On the whole, the participants had met one of the two genres in their studies and had some ideas about it, but the task of ML writing was completely new to them.

5.2 CVs

The analysis of the current corpus revealed that although students had had explicit instruction in CV writing in their Hungarian Language and Literature classes, only 2 out of the 9 students tried to produce a table-format CV (CV1 and CV2). Though these two CVs were closer to the template in format, some of the content elements appeared in their ML sporadically. In addition, though they included a list of events, these were not categorized into sections on education and work experience, but were organized just like in the case of the narrative Hungarian CV, and the events were not shown from a perspective of relevance to the job posting. Figure 5 shows these two CVs written separately from their MLs, together with the template and the inclusion (+ sign) or exclusion (- sign) of each item of the template. The spelling and grammar mistakes of the quoted texts of the corpus (both CVs and MLs) have not been corrected in order to give a fuller picture of the language competence of the writers.

CV TEMPLATE based on document analysis	Mentioned in CVs	CV 1	CV 2
Personal information		Curriculum Vitae	Curriculum Vitae
Name	+	Christina Kis	XY
Address	-	2007: I was passed the	1991: I was born in Budapest.
Phone number	-	exam in Italian and in	1997-2005: I went to the
Date of birth	+	German. I worked in Italy	elementary school. My average
Email address	-	on the beach, I met with	was 5.
Nationality	-	people.	2005-2009: I went to the
Work experience		2006-2001: I went to	grammary school. My average
Dates of work experience	+	grammary school where	was almost always 5.
Names of employers	-	my results were good	2006 summer: I worked as a
Responsibilities	+	2000: I passed the	waitress in a restaurant in my
Occupation/position	+	intermediate exam in	living place
Education and training		English	2009-2013: I went to the
Dates of education and training	+	2001-1993: I went to	University of Tourism. I
Names of institutions	-	elementary school.	practiced it every summer.
Subjects/majors	+	1988: I was born.	2011: I passed a high-level
Skills (general and others)	+		language exam in English.
			2012: I passed an intermediate- level language exam in Spanish and German.

Figure 5. The CV template and the two CVs compared.

The remaining seven CVs were combined with the motivational letters in a narrative form (ML 3-9). The motivational letter (ML 3) presented below represents this phenomenon:

Dear Sir/Madam,
 My name is Krisztina Nagy, I was born in 1985.
 I studied at tourism university in my country in Hungary. I've worked in England in the summer, I practiced the language. Last year I've done the advanced level examination in English. In England I worked as a waitress, this year the restaurant invited me to this term again, but I have new plans for the future. I moved separate from my family. My pipe dream is to travel around the world. I can easily work in team, I like to know people.
 I would like to apply for the job.
 I'm waiting for your answer excitedly.
 Yours sincerely,
 Signature. (ML 3)

In this letter, all CV items such as personal information, education and work experience are present, but due to the format and the purpose of the sentence 'I would like to apply for the job,' it was categorized as an attempt at a motivational letter.

On the whole, it can be stated that the template put forward following the document survey proved to be applicable in analyzing the student CVs. Events in the CVs, however, were not grouped either according to function or relevance. It seems as if in this corpus it is left to the reader to decide which elements are important and relevant for the job opening. The writer notes down everything, and leaves it up to the reader to take responsibility in choosing the required elements as the basis of the ensuing decision. Hinds (1987) termed such cultures as reader responsible. Kosztolányi, a famous Hungarian writer at the beginning of the 20th century, is claimed to have said that his work of art was finished only when the reader had read it. It might be possible that the same cultural value influenced the student writing processes and surfaced in the end-products.

In addition, the other characteristic of the two separately written CVs (CV1 and CV2) was that despite the table format, the same issues were included in both the CVs and their corresponding MLs. The CVs were more than mere lists of facts, whereas the MLs did not focus on the reason for applying or "selling oneself" (Bhatia, 1993). All CVs (CV1-9) represent the life story of the writers in a chronological order, whether from past to recent or recent to past events, and irrespective of the format. This means that the events were listed according to time, and not according to functional categories, as suggested by the template. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner have been working with a cultural dimension that divides cultures into ones which focus on time as a sequence, and ones which focus on time as a means of synchronization (Pethő & Heidrich, 2005). It might very well be that the phenomenon surfacing here is due to a preference for looking at time as a sequence. Whether this point of view is a universal Hungarian characteristic remains to be researched in the future. At the same time, combining other elements with CVs, and thus saying more than expected, together with a reader-responsible attitude, might reflect a tendency for forming an integrative world-view, a dimension also worked out earlier by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (Pethő & Heidrich, 2005). An integrative culture does not like to leave anything out, since the larger context is of utmost importance to it. Looking at the details would only mean giving a false impression, and that is unacceptable.

To sum up, it can be said that the impression of reader responsibility and the integrative and holistic world-view that the CVs reflect, along with the organizing principle of time as a sequence, suggest that the student CVs do not really resemble the expected template. The analysis so far draws attention to the fact that the boundaries and characteristics of CVs

might be differently drawn in the Hungarian writers' schemata from what the Anglo-American templates suggest or prescribe.

5.3 Motivational Letters

Concerning the motivational letters, the corpus is much more varied. All nine letters perform the aim of the motivational letter, that is, selling oneself (Seely, 2005; Bhatia, 1993), but rhetorically and linguistically they are all inept culturally. The order of moves do not follow Bhatia's template. For instance, only one letter starts with the *establishing credentials* element ('I am writing to you because I saw your advertisement in a newspaper' ML 4). In ML 7 'I have read that Wizz Air is seeking cabin crew of its flights' does perform this function, but it comes up only in move 3. Another possible option would be move 2, since according to Bhatia there is a linguistic possibility to start a motivational letter in English with *introducing candidature*, more precisely, with *offering candidature*.

Instead of *establishing candidature*, seven out of the nine MLs (ML 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9) start with *introducing the candidature*, which could be accepted (see Bhatia sample analysis, Figure 3), if they started with the expected 'I wish to make application for...' sentence. Instead, they refer to the name, age and sometimes the place of birth of the applicant, as in the examples below:

'My name is XY. I was born in 1988, so I'm 19 years old.' (ML1)

or

'I am XY, a twenty-year old student.' (ML 5)

The problem with the cited sentences is not primarily their position, but their form of realization. If the same text were written in Hungarian, a Hungarian reader might not find any fault with their positioning and timing. Bhatia's *introducing candidature* move does not contain any personal information, however. Thus it seems that this way of introducing the letters reflects a Hungarian characteristic of introducing the self that contains name (gender embedded), age and, occasionally, place and date of birth. It might very well be that the effect of *nativization* of MLs that Bhatia (1993) reports on is responsible for this phenomenon as well. The present analysis therefore kept introducing candidature separate from its three sub-parts and named this peculiarity *introducing the self*.

Essential detailing of the candidature was problematic to identify not only when it was mixed with *introducing the self* as in ML 5 'I am Robert Nagy, a 20 year-old student' where the name and the age belonged to the self representation, and studenthood to the *details of the candidature*, but also because some letters mixed this sub-move with *offering candidature* (ML 3, 4 and 6) and *indicating the value of candidature*. In addition, the highest number of sentences (55) occurred in this move. The most typical characteristic of this move was using the time-sequence as the organizational principle. By this I mean that the logic behind sentences – due to the lack of explicit conjunctions and adverbials – is the implicit sequence of events.

The next sub-move, *indicating the value of the candidature*, produced the most exciting sentences. The sentences 'I'd be great in your crew because I'm hard working, easygoing and helpful...so I'm suitable to the team' (ML 8) and 'so I can say I'm perfect' (ML 2) represent the phenomenon that Bhatia (1993) calls 'self-appraisal', and which was titled by one of the participants as self-glorification. To compensate for the 'awkward' feeling of promoting oneself which had a negative connotation for the Hungarian participants, the technique of lexical boosting (Teh, 1986; cited in Bhatia, 1993, p.51) can be observed in

many of the letters, for example ‘I meet all the requirements’ (ML 5), and ‘so my English is really good’ (ML 9).

The next move, *offering incentives*, was completely lacking from the texts, and the *enclosing documents* move appeared in varying places, with no apparent pattern. The move of *pressuring tactics* was expressed by sentences like ‘I really hope, that you will choose me for this job’ (ML 1) and ‘I really hope that I will be suitable for this work and you will employ me’ (ML 2). In Bhatia’s model this function was performed with more explicit tools and the sentence ‘I am looking forward to hearing from you’. The latter was put under *soliciting response* in the present analysis since it had this function in the given context. Finally, the last move was carried out differently as well, since the students used their signature or the expressions ‘Yours faithfully / sincerely’ to express the move *ending politely*. In Bhatia’s model, this function is completely separate and uses the model sentence ‘Thank you very much’ followed by the above-mentioned formulae and the signature.

To summarize, the analysis of the data – conducted to answer the question of what the rhetorical structural characteristics of CVs and MLs written in English by Hungarian students are – shows a strong tendency for the participants to write a CV combined with the ML despite their previous training on the different existing types of CVs. Though the ML texts fulfilled the format and, to some extent, the linguistic requirements of the formal letter, and Bhatia’s moves also appeared in them, the emphasis put on the moves differed from that of the Anglo-American template. For example, the essential detailing of candidature had twice as many sentences in the Hungarian corpus (42% of all sentences) than Bhatia’s sample letter had (21% of all sentences). In addition, a new move could also be identified. This ‘*introducing the self*’ move in the Hungarian-English MLs might stem from the writer’s self being represented as a holistic entity, a tendency which seems to be so powerful as to require a full move on its own. This holistic tendency accords with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s integrative world-view dimension, which was shown to have been present to some extent in the CVs as well. Furthermore, the MLs of the corpus are descriptive in nature, which does not serve as a criterion in Bhatia’s analysis and definition. In addition, stating the purpose of the letter, that is, the intention to apply for the job, which is essential for a text to belong to the genre of MLs, was missing from all student MLs. Thus, the MLs did not live up to one of the most important criteria of the genre. Last but not least, the organizing principle of the events represented in the sentences was again the sequence of time, just as with the CVs. The sequence presented in ML 3 shows how the simple sentences make up a time line: ‘My name is...I was born in 1985.’ ‘I studied tourism...I’ve worked in England...I’ve done language exam...I moved separate.... My pipe dream is...’.

I am inclined to conclude from the data that the schema of a ML and CV written in English seems to be somewhat different from the schema the Hungarian student employed instinctively. In addition, the previously mentioned American second coder and I both found it surprising how culturally inappropriate the texts were compared to both the CV templates and Bhatia’s ML structure. However, it is exactly this ‘surprise’ that I would like to draw attention to. It came from our instinctive expectations that the linguistically reasonably competent students would be able to produce something that more closely fulfills the expectations of the target culture. The fact that they already knew quite a lot of English prevented us from seeing what else might be at work during text production, and what else they need to know to be able to compose a CV and a ML ‘by the book’.

Some might claim that the results are due to the participants being novices in the art of writing CVs and MLs in a foreign language. I have to acknowledge that there might be some truth to this. However, it is exactly their not yet thoroughly polished writing skills that made it

possible for the writing processes to remain instinctive. As such, the results provide a glimpse of how the natural and cross-culturally uninitiated text production processes ultimately manifest themselves in a foreign language product.

It is my assumption – based on Kaplan’s (1966, 1987) work – that it is the schematic representation of the traditional Hungarian CV that constructs the cultural schemata of CVs for Hungarian students. Similarly, the lack of a schematic structure for MLs written separately in the Hungarian practice could have resulted in the combined CVs and MLs produced by the learners. I believe that the results clearly exemplify how one’s own culture might influence the target language products, and how knowing the language itself does not necessarily lead to culturally acceptable products.

5.4 Cultural dimensions

Although I set out to examine eight cultural dimensions in the corpus, soon after beginning the analysis, I found that the corpus is too small to exemplify all of these. Nevertheless, the analysis did bring up important issues. I set out with a certain set of cultural value orientations in mind, but the analysis revealed a different set. An overview of the results of the cultural analysis can be seen in Figure 6, and a detailed description follows.

Individualism-collectivism	-
Uncertainty avoidance-uncertainty tolerance	-
Universalism-particularism	-
Long term orientation	Time as sequencing principle
Polychronic time	‘And because I will love my job I think I meet the requirements’ (ML 1) - attitude more important than achievement
Masculinity	Grades – importance of achievement, but otherwise neutral
High power distance	‘...if I could travel, I would be even better’ in ML 2 – personal and professional development of the employee is the leader’s responsibility
High context dependency	‘How’ more important than ‘what’; marital status important; narrative; age and information on family
Integrative	Personality – holistic approach
Time as sequence	Sequencing order of text
Responsibility	Reader’s

Figure 6. The cultural dimensional characteristics of the corpus.

Though three dimensions (individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and universalism) were not identified within the corpus, it is possible to argue that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s time as a sequence dimension is part of Hofstede’s long term orientation value. It can be hypothesized that centering the CVs and MLs on the sequencing of time is related to a long term oriented culture’s focusing on the past, tradition, and stability. Another aspect might be seen in the sentences ‘And because I will love my job I think I meet the requirements’ (ML 1); ‘I have learnt how to tolerate people’(…) ‘I’d be great in your crew because I’m hardworking, easygoing and helpful.’ ‘...so I’m suitable to the team.’ (ML 8); ‘I learnt to deal with people...so I am ready for this job’ (ML 4); and ‘I really hope that I will be suitable for this work and you will employ me.’ (ML 2). These might show that attitude is

valued over performance, which might be regarded as a polychronic value orientation, but the case is difficult to decide due to the limited size of the corpus. If, however, it proves to be a consistent characteristic that attitude is valued over performance, which in turn entails the value of efficiency and good time management, it will contradict the Anglo-American/Euro CV template and its required representation of the self in the job-hunting context, where wasting time (reading long, irrelevant applications) is a big monochronic cultural 'no-no'. Furthermore, the fact that grades were almost always referred to in the texts might be the characteristic of a masculine culture, which, according to the definition of the dimension, entails the importance of achievement and competition. Unfortunately, generalizable conclusions cannot be drawn due to the non-representative sample size. The same goes for power distance. Though this value could be behind the sentence '...if I could travel, I would be even better' in ML 2, by which the responsibility of professional and personal development is put in the hands of the leader, the authority, the evidence is insufficient to be considered substantial. However, it is usually a distinctive sign of a large power distance value if leaders are thought to take care of employees and tell them what to do.

High vs. low context, on the other hand, surfaced more tangibly. The Anglo-American world is considered to be low-context in as much as it transmits information in an explicit code, that is, the meaning is determined by 'what' is said and there is less emphasis on 'how' it is said. This seems to be the case with the difference between Hungarian and Anglo-American CVs. Whereas the CVs written in English are expected to contain details and facts relevant for the applied job, the traditional Hungarian CV focuses on how a person can tell his or her life story. In a high-context culture family status and age also have much more importance (Pethő & Heidrich, 2005). The fact that seven out of the nine 'CVs' showed narrative characteristics as well as the inclusion of age and some kind of information on family (e.g., 'My father is English, so I spent a lot of time in England...') provides some support for the claim that Hungarian culture is highly context-dependent.

Finally, the analysis of the corpus brought up three distinctive features not included among the original cultural aspects. The first of these was the analytic versus integrative (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner In: Pethő & Heidrich, 2005), the second on was the time as sequence vs. time as synchronization orientation (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner In: Pethő & Heidrich, 2005), and the third was Hinds' reader vs. writer responsibility (1987). The analytic versus integrative cultural dimension of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (Pethő & Heidrich, 2005), which might explain such characteristics of the CVs and MLs as self-representation with extra details, less focused structures, and lack of categorizing of life events according to function. As pointed out earlier, integrative cultures focus on the whole and feel it to be lacking and incomplete when the focus is merely on details. The representation of the self in the corpus of the Hungarian students might arise due to this value orientation.

The other dimensional characteristic found in the corpus is described by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1996) time as sequence vs. time as synchronization value orientation. In cultures where time is seen as a sequence, actions happen one after the other. Time as synchronization cultures see events as being synchronized, and find order in their coordination. The narrative, time-sequence controlled characteristic of the Hungarian CV and ML samples seem to fit the first description, with both the tabular CVs and the MLs utilizing a straight timeline for connecting ideas. The Anglo-American template, on the other hand, shows the characteristic of time as synchronization where the governing principle of the content and structure is grouping things according to function, not time.

Finally, Hinds's (1987) typology of reader vs. writer responsibility might also be evoked. While the templates seem to rely more on the writer taking responsibility for what is written and how it is written, the Hungarian student corpus seems to reflect a tendency where it is the reader's responsibility to extract the important/relevant information from the text.

6 Conclusion

On the whole, it might be stated that the present case study has identified important issues in CV and ML genre analysis. Based on the theoretical part of the present research, it may be claimed that in Hungary today the accepted and practiced CV format is that which has been called the 'Anglo-American type' résumé. It comes in a table format and its details greatly depend on the position applied for, but the components always include some kind of personal details and contact details, educational and employment history, as well as skills. Though the empirical part of the study was successful in testing the applicability of the resulting CV template on a small corpus, it is advisable to further test its adequacy on a larger corpus.

In answer to the first research question of the empirical pilot study it was found that though students did receive explicit instruction on how CVs are written today and how they used to be written according to the Hungarian tradition, this knowledge did not surface in their task performance. The second research question concerned the rhetorical structure of the CVs and MLs written in English by Hungarian EFL students. It was found that only the basic format was realized to some extent. The texts did not display the typical cultural and linguistic qualities. It was also found that the self-appraisal of MLs felt necessary in the Anglo-American tradition to provide arguments for selecting the candidate was felt to be self-glorification by some of the participants (instinctive remark of participants after reading the instructions of the task). Self-glorification was not valued positively, thus making writing a culturally appropriate ML difficult. Thirdly, it was also found that there are signs of variation between the cultural dimensions characterizing the CV and ML templates and the texts comprising the current the corpus, though this needs further verification using a larger corpus with randomly selected participants.

Concerning the size and nature of the sample one might remark that the present corpus was comprised of students whose life experience did not include applying for a job in reality. Furthermore, one of the limitations of the present study is its sample size. Certainly, the results of a study based on a few students and their single performance cannot be generalized. An ideal research design would include many more participants, with different language backgrounds, maybe even implementing the task at different times to limit personal psychological influences on the output of the participants. It is also true that 17-year-old students cannot be expected to represent the maturity of a 30-year-old job applicant. However, a larger, representative sample, whose profile is identical with real-life job applicants, is difficult to achieve and remains the task of future research. Despite the small sample size, the present study had the advantage of having a sample whose educational and linguistic background could be trusted to be homogenous, which helped to screen errors due to inaccurate sampling. Finally, despite the limitations of the study, it does provide sufficient initial data to be able to argue that students should be prepared in advance for the kind of requirements a job application entails.

7 Pedagogical implications

Even though the present results tend to agree with some other research findings (Falkné, 2000; and Hofstede, <http://www.geert-hofstede.com>), the number of participants limits their transferability. Nevertheless, the importance of analyzing CVs and MLs cross-culturally is believed to have been sufficiently illustrated by this small student-corpus. The results might give further guidance on what happens during text-production, and thus also on what practicing teachers of both Hungarian Language and Literature and foreign languages should pay more attention to if they want to help increase their students' success and cultural awareness. Guidelines on the required format and contents of CVs and MLs have to take into consideration the different contexts, the language of realization, the cultural expectations of the reader and the cultural schemata of the CV and ML writer when evaluating, teaching, and writing CVs and MLs. It may therefore be hypothesized that more explicit teaching of the linguistic and rhetorical aspects, together with the cultural elements of CVs and MLs, is highly required both in Hungarian and in foreign languages. The guidelines should be clear and explicit in order to provide the utmost help in learning for those who will need to write such genres.

Focusing on the 'what' and 'how' of CV and ML writing in the EFL classroom already in secondary education raises cultural awareness while improving the basic job-hunting skills of the students. Learning a foreign language is the best way of enhancing one's sensitivity to cultural differences (Byram, 1997). Though creating a second language identity takes time (Brown, 2000), the explicit teaching of cultural differences has proved to accelerate the process and prepare learners successfully for culture clashes (Nemetz-Robinson, 1985). It not only decreases the chance for intercultural misunderstandings, but also alleviates the surprises of culture clashes in as much as unfamiliar situations may be accepted and handled with more tolerance. The combination of raising cultural awareness and the improvement of CV and ML writing skills is assumed to increase the school-leavers' overall marketability in the Hungarian job market.

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APPENDIX

The task used as a prompt for the students to write CVs and motivational letters:

Ön Kis Krisztina/Nagy Róbert (a megfelelő aláhúzendó), középiskolai tanulmányait idén befejező diák. Az alábbi hirdetést egy Magyarországon megjelenő angol nyelvű újság tartalmazta, amire szívesen jelentkezik tanulmányai befejezése után. Írja meg a jelentkezéshez szükséges angol nyelvű önéletrajzot és motivációs levelet.

Cabin Attendants - Budapest base

Location: **Budapest**

Job Code: **CAB10/2007**

Wizz Air is currently seeking friendly, service-oriented and flexible people who take pride in their performance and their appearance. As a Wizz Air cabin crew member you will have a busy and fun lifestyle. Because we are a friendly and fun-loving team, we celebrate many occasions like Christmas and company anniversaries at Wizz Air every year.

Requirements

- Aged 19 or over
- High school education degree
- Ability to swim
- Some face-to-face customer service and sales skills

The perfect candidate also:

- Possesses excellent communication skills
- Is flexible and willing to do shift working
- Is able to work under pressure
- Can easily work in a team
- An intermediate -level language exam (A, B or C) in one of the world languages is required by the Hungarian Civil Aviation Authority.

Note, that for security reasons you will be asked to provide reference contacts with names and up-to-date telephone numbers from your previous workplace or, if this is your first job, your school.

If you would like to join us, please send your English CV and a cover letter to the following address:

**Wizz Air Hungary Légitársasági Kft.
Airport Business Park C2, Lőrinci út 59.
2220 Vecsés, Hungary**