

5 Register and genre perspectives on hate speech

1 Introduction

Chapter 4 explained how racist discourse is encapsulated in ideologically-based linguistic surface structures, such as racial epithets, polarisation, partisan semantics and agency. This chapter elaborates on the surface linguistic structures that articulate hate speech. Specifically, the analysis in this chapter concentrates on texts or discourse segments of various dimensions in which hate speech manifests itself and on the genre or genres (Solin 2011) into which hate texts can be classified. The discussion attempts to answer two essential questions: Is there a hate register? Is there a hate speech genre?

2 Discourse, texts and genres

Reisigl and Wodak explained how the concepts of discourse, texts and genres are intertwined:

discourse is a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts that manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as *texts*, that belong to specific semiotic types, i.e. genres (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 36).

One can learn from the above quote that hate speech, like any other type of discourse, can manifest itself through thematically interrelated texts linked to other texts over time. This type of relationship, which is commonly referred to as *intertextuality* (Kristeva 1980; Bakhtin 1981; Bazerman 2004), can be established, as Reisigl and Wodak suggested, in a variety of ways: (a) explicit reference to a topic, (b) references to the same events, (c) allusions or evocations and (d) transfer of main arguments from one text to another (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 28).

Therefore, hateful texts may be considered parts of hate speech that express *misethnicity*, a concept Tsesis defines as “hatred towards groups because of their racial, historic, cultural, or linguistic characteristics” (Tsesis 2002: 81). Hatred is linguistically embodied in hateful expressions and speech acts. Texts make such hateful expressions and acts durable over time and, therefore, bridge two speech situations that are not usually adjacent in time and space: the speech production and the speech reception. The non-adjacency in time and space between the production and reception of “destructive messages”

(Tsesis 2002) challenges the imminence standard for adjudicating cases of criminally inflammatory speech in the American legal system (see Chapters 2 and 3). I will go back to this controversial legal standard in Chapter 6, which addresses hate speech from the perspective of Speech act theory.

According to Biber and Conrad (2009), texts can be analysed from three perspectives: (1) the *register perspective*, (2) the *genre perspective* and (3) the *style perspective*. For purposes of analysis, this chapter focuses on the former two perspectives, leaving aside the latter. The register and genre perspectives share the concept that texts can be described according to their contexts, considering the situation, the participants and the communicative purposes associated with the texts. Both perspectives differ in two essential respects. First, whereas the linguistic component of register analysis describes the linguistic features that are pervasive in the text variety, the linguistic component of genre analysis describes the conventional structures, which may only appear once in the text variety. Second, register analysis can be done on both text excerpts and complete texts, while genre analysis requires complete texts.

3 A register perspective on hateful texts

Biber and Conrad (2009) adopted a systemic functional perspective on the concept of register. In their view, the register perspective offers an analytical framework for studying texts that consists of three elements: (1) the situational context, including the physical setting, the participants and the different roles they play in the communicative situation, (2) the communicative purpose(s) and (3) the linguistic features that are pervasive in the text variety. Biber and Conrad's proposed analytical framework narrowly draws on Halliday's *context of situation*, whose purpose is to explain "how a text relates to the social processes within which it is located" (Halliday 1978: 10). Context of situation consists of three parameters known as semiotic functions: (1) *Tenor*, (2) *Field* and (3) *Mode*. Tenor concerns the participants, their roles and the type of social relationship between them. Field refers to the topic or area of external reality with which the text deals. Mode refers to the channel through which communication occurs and to text construction. In the following, I will examine each of the aforementioned semiotic functions, Tenor, Field and Mode, in detail.

3.1 The context of situation describing a hate register

A hate register can be described through the context of situation in which the text is anchored. The Tenor is diverse: The speaker often belongs to a dominant group, whose speech is driven by prejudice and intolerance towards members of a group identifiable by legally-protected characteristics, while the addressees can be of different types. On the one hand, there are the ingroups, with whom the hate speaker shares the same ideology, prejudice and intolerance. On the other hand, there are the outgroups, who are the object of hate. There may also be overhearers, bystanders and eavesdroppers. These latter people could be eventually indoctrinated and recruited into the association or organisation. The roles and types of relationships established and maintained between the speaker, the ingroups and the outgroups are complex. Characteristically, the speaker plays the role of the saviour, the ingroups represent the victims, and the outgroups signify a dangerous threat putting the ingroups' social privileges and economic interests at risk. van Dijk (1992) called this role shift *victim-perpetrator reversal*. In addition, the types of relationships that the participants establish and maintain between them may be of two kinds: (1) a relationship of solidarity between the hate-advocating speaker and the ingroups and (2) a relationship of power and social dominance between the hate-advocating speaker and the outgroups.

The Field typically contains fallacies about the outgroups' moral inferiority or non-humanity and false statements of fact harmful to their dignity and social reputation (Delgado 1982; Matsuda 1989; Waldron 2012; Brown 2017b).

The Mode can be varied. First, hateful texts can be conveyed through any communication channel: oral, written, or multimodal – that is, combining language and other means of communication, such as images, sound recordings and footage, amongst other possibilities. Second, hateful texts can be either non-interactive or interactive, or both. Third, hateful texts can be non-computer mediated or computer-mediated. Fourth, the hateful text's rhetoric is characteristically manipulative, thereby appealing to the emotions (*pathos*) of the members of the intended audience.

3.2 The set of communicative purposes describing the register of hateful texts

In theory, registers are described for their primary communicative purposes. However, defining a register's communicative purpose appears to be indefinite and sometimes subjective. I concur with Bhatia that "if one was looking for clear-cut, definite and objective criteria to define and identify communicative

purposes for each genre, one would necessarily be frustrated by the complex realities of the world of discourse” (Bhatia 2014 [2004]: 130).

Marwick and Ross (2014) pointed to intent-based hate speech as one of the core elements of hate speech (see Chapter 1). I argue that the register of hateful texts cannot be described by a single communicative purpose but, instead, by a set of communicative purposes, such as to disseminate, advocate and incite hatred, hostility or violence against the members of a target group, without communicating any legitimate message (Moran 1994; Ward 1997; Benesh 2014; Marwick & Ross 2014).

3.3 The linguistic features describing the register of hateful texts

Registers can also be described through the pervasive linguistic features of the text. Critical discourse analysts (see Chapter 4) have provided useful insights into several characteristic ideological structures common in racist texts (and talk). Specifically, van Dijk (2011) pointed to the following set of *ideological structures*:¹⁰¹

- a) *Polarisation*: the positive representation of the ingroup – e.g. the glorification of our country contrasts with the negative representation of the outgroup, typically depicted as outsiders and invaders.
- b) *Pronouns*: racist speakers use the first-person plural form of the personal pronoun (We) – in its various grammatical forms (us, our, ours) – to refer to themselves and fellow members, while they use the third-person plural form of the personal pronoun (They) – in its various grammatical forms – (them, their, theirs) to refer to the members of a target group.
- c) *Ideological square*: racist speakers combine hyperbolic emphasis when referring to the positive aspects of the ingroup along with minimisation of the ingroup’s weaknesses or the outgroup’s strengths.
- d) *Activities*: racist speakers employ *deontic modality* to refer to the activities the ingroups do or must do to either protect the ingroup’s social privileges and economic interests or to marginalise, attack or control the outgroup.
- e) *Norms and values*: racist speakers refer to the social norms and values the ingroups must strive for – e.g. Freedom and Justice.
- f) *Interests*: racist speakers refer to the ingroup’s interests, such as their material or symbolic resources.

¹⁰¹ Although van Dijk considered the ideological structures common in racial hate speech, they may be equally applied to any discourse expressing hatred towards other legally-protected groups.

Some of the above ideological structures can be seen, for instance, in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969) (see Chapter 4). *Brandenburg*'s speech contains polarisation (the positive presentation of the ingroup v. the negative presentation of the outgroup), pronouns ("We" v. "They"), activities ("This is what we are going to do to the niggers", "Let's give them back to the dark garden", "Let's go back to constitutional betterment", "Bury the niggers"); and interests ("Give us our rights", "Freedom"). It should be pointed out that for each of these ideological structures, there may be local generic forms expressing them (van Dijk 2011). In other words, the linguistic features that are pervasive in a particular genre may not be pervasive in another. Therefore, proposing a closed catalogue or inventory of the characteristic linguistic features describing a hate register may be impractical and fruitless.

Despite the inherent difficulty in determining the characteristic linguistic features of a hate register, CDA researchers have recently started to use corpus linguistics in an attempt to identify such features. For example, Brindle (2016) combined CDA and a corpus linguistics (CL) methodology,¹⁰² using the Sketch Engine tool, to analyse white supremacist language in a web-forum dealing with homosexuality on the avowedly white supremacist website Stormfront. In his research, Brindle analysed the lexicon employed in the construction of heterosexual white masculinities, gay men, racial minorities and other outgroups. Brindle's study revealed several high-frequency terms that are pervasive in Stormfront's homophobic texts. These terms are:

"queer(s)", "homo(s)", "fag(s)", "faggot(s)", "faggotry", "pervert(s)", "perversion", "pedophiles", "paedophilia", "sodomite", "sodomy", "molest", "molesters", "molestation", "degenerate" and "degenerates".

One should be cautious about establishing a correlation between a word's high frequency of occurrence in a text with its status as a characteristic linguistic feature of a hate register. In this regard, Brindle (2016) hit the nail on the head when he argued that the words not present on a frequency list may just be as noteworthy as those included. In this vein, in analysing racial epithets, Technau claimed that "hate speech can be identified as the most central, albeit not the most frequent, mode of use" (Technau 2018: 25). The same author explained that other non-referential and non-pejorative uses of racial epithets may be more pervasive in other contexts that are free of hate speech – e.g. mobbing

102 Brindle (2016) applies three types of analysis to the corpus: (1) a corpus-driven approach centred on the study of frequencies, keywords, collocation and concordance analysis, (2) a detailed qualitative study of posts from the forum and the threads in which they are located and (3) a corpus-based approach which combines the corpus-linguistic and qualitative analyses.

and insulting; appropriation in counter-speech; rap, in which racial slurs, such as *nigga* are applied to the members of a target group (referential uses) by a member of the same target group (non-pejorative uses); mock impoliteness in youth language and banter – racial or homophobic terms are applied to non-members (non-referential uses) or to people for whom the speaker has an affection (non-pejorative uses); neutral mentioning in academic discourse; and incognizant uses.

I argue therefore that it might be more productive to look for the features in a text that have *collective salience* (Kecskes 2014: 184) for the ingroup than searching for the pervasive linguistic features of a text (Biber & Conrad 2009). Whereas *pervasiveness* is based on *statistical significance*, collective salience is grounded in *prominence*. Prominence does not come from the language itself. On the contrary, it is external to it, because it is the result of prior experience and conventionalisation shared with the other members of the speech community.¹⁰³ I concur with Technau (2018: 27) that the collective salience of racial epithets, such as *nigger*, *kike*, *kraut* and other group-based slurs – *faggot* and *spaz*, is framed by the context of situation and the communicative purpose(s) of such texts. Specifically, the context of situation must include a hate-advocating speaker communicating hateful messages that are directed at the members of a legally-protected group. In this context, some linguistic features may have collective salience because they have the power to invoke social prejudice, hostility or violence against a target group. Such power derives from the ideas, beliefs, views and attitudes the hate-advocating speaker shares with the audience of the texts. The common ground shared by the hate-advocating speaker and their audience facilitates the recognition of the linguistic features that are salient in a hate register.

Although most of the research on hate speech has focused on identifying the overt lexico-semantic features typical of a hate register, a recent publication edited by Knoblock (2022) breaks new ground in demonstrating how grammatical features such as morphology (Mattiello 2022: 34–58; Tarasova & Sánchez Fajardo 2022: 59–81), word formation (Beliaeva 2022: 177–196), pronoun use (Thál & Elmerot 2022: 97–117; Lind & Nübling 2022: 118–139; Flores Ohlson 2022: 161–176), verb mode (Bianchi 2022: 222–240) and syntactic structures are appropriated, manipulated and exploited by hate-advocating speakers to express hate speech covertly. The analysis of the grammar of hate speech marks a turn in corpus-assisted discourse studies, which typically focus on the frequency, keyness and semantic

¹⁰³ See Chapter 4 for the theory of combinational (semantic) externalism (CE) (Hom 2008). Chapter 8 also looks at the role collective salience plays in speech production and speech interpretation.

prosody of words. According to Geyer, Bick and Kleene (2022: 242), whereas words and expressions are easy to detect automatically on internet-based social networks, grammatical constructions are much more difficult to identify and remove from a platform.

An additional difficulty in determining the linguistic features describing a hate register comes from their *implicitness* and *indirectness* (see Chapters 6 and 8). In examining the present limitations of corpus linguistics, Ruzaite argued that qualitative analysis can be more informative because they hate-advocating speaker ever-increasingly resorts to “creative language use” (Ruzaite 2018: 110). For example, let me comment on the use of *topoi* (conclusion rules) in argumentation (Wodak & Meyer 2016 [2001]). Topoi are often expressed implicitly but can be made explicit as conditional or causal paraphrases, such as *If X, then Y* or *Y is the result of X*. As a result, hateful messages may be conveyed implicitly, leaving almost no trace for an algorithm to detect at the surface level. At present, hate-advocating speakers are aware of social reprobation and hence in many jurisdictions they tend to convey their destructive messages implicitly and indirectly to avoid indictment and criminal prosecution.

4 A genre perspective on hateful texts

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the genre perspective shares with the register perspective the idea that texts can be described according to the context of situation and the set of communicative purposes associated with them. In Christie’s view, genre theory differs from register theory in terms of “the amount of emphasis it places on social purpose as a determining variable in language use” (Christie 1987: 59). In this vein, I claim that the difference between these theories goes far beyond a mere question of emphasis, because genre theory aims to provide a theory of language use. I concur with Bhatia that:

genre theory gives a grounded or what sociologists call a *thick* description of language use rather than a surface-level description of statistically significant language features, which has been very typical of much of register analysis (Bhatia 1996: 40).

Genre theory has been traditionally applied to “the study of situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalised academic or professional settings” (Bhatia 2014 [2004]: 26), whether defined as *typification of rhetorical action* (North American orientation), as in Miller (1984), Bazerman (1994) and Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995); *staged goal-oriented social processes* (Australian orientation), as in Martin, Frances and Rothery (1987), Christie (1987) and Martin (1993), or *conventionalised communicative event* (British tradition), as in Dudley-Evans (1986), Swales

(1990) and Bhatia (1993;1997; 2014 [2004]). Despite the various orientations emerging from applications of the theory in academic and professional contexts, genre theory, as Bhatia argued, “does seem to have a common paradigm, a coherent methodology, and an overlapping concern with applications” (Bhatia 1996: 41). According to the same author, the three orientations to genre theory share five essential features (Bhatia 1996: 47–54):

- 1) *emphasis on conventions*: genres are based on shared communicative purposes, rhetorical conventions and regularities in structural forms;
- 2) *dynamism*: genres are dynamic rhetorical structures that can be exploited and manipulated according to conditions of use;
- 3) *propensity for innovation*: genres gradually change over time in response to new socio-cognitive needs of users;
- 4) *generic versatility*: genres can adapt their set of communicative purposes depending on the context of situation; and
- 5) *genre knowledge*: genres imply knowledge about particular processes of genre construction, dissemination and interpretation.

Genre theory has been successfully applied to analysing academic and professional types of discourse. One can presume therefore that its application to the analysis of language crimes, in this case hate speech, can contribute to widening the scope of genre theory and provide it with real-life input data from social contexts other than the academic and the professional.

4.1 Genre as typified rhetorical action

Genres may be seen as typical responses to recurring rhetorical situations. Although Bitzer does not use the term genre, his account of rhetorical situations clarifies the way genres are constructed as *typified text-types*:

From day to day, year to year, comparable situations occur, prompting comparable responses; hence rhetorical forms are born, and a special vocabulary, grammar, and style are established. The situations recur, and because we experience situations and the rhetorical responses to them, a form of discourse is not only established but comes to have a power of its own (Bitzer 1968: 13).

In a similar vein, Bazerman (1994) defines genre as typified utterance and intention, and explains the concept in these words:

over a period of time, individuals perceive homologies in circumstances that encourage them to see these as occasions for similar kinds of utterances. These typified utterances, often developing standardised formal features, appear as ready solutions to similar

appearing problems. Eventually, the genres sediment into forms so expected that readers are surprised or even uncooperative if a standard perception of the situation is not met by an utterance of the expected form (Bazerman 1994: 82).

The view of genre as typified utterance and intention has stimulated research into genre construction, with special emphasis on “rhetorical conventions” and “typical textualization patterns” (Bhatia 2014 [2004]: 27–28). This emphasis has, to some extent, promoted the false assumption that genres are static linguistic artefacts, highly predictable and easily identifiable because of their conventionalised rhetorical patterns (Giltrow 2013). Nevertheless, one of the characteristics of hate speech is that it is not bound to a specific form, and hence it is highly unpredictable. Let me give some substance to this assertion by taking up the various genres in the court cases associated with hate speech we looked at in Chapter 3:

- a) *Terminiello v. Chicago* (1949): a speech delivered by a priest in a massive auditorium.
- b) *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969): a speech delivered by a Klan leader to a large group of Klansmen. The speech was even broadcast on television.
- c) *National Socialist Party v. Skokie* (1977): a massive demonstration.
- d) *Jersild v. Denmark* (1994): an article published in the serious press describing the racist attitudes of a racist group in Østerbro (Copenhagen) and a television interview of the leaders of such group.
- e) *Virginia v. Black* (2003): a speech delivered by a Klan leader to a large group of Klansmen and burning crosses displayed in public places.
- f) *A. v. United Kingdom* (2003): a political speech on municipal housing policy delivered in the House of Commons and a press release of the same political speech including photographs.
- g) *United States v. Wilcox* (2008): profiles posted on an internet platform and a website associated with white supremacy ideologue David Lane.
- h) *Fáber v. Hungary* (2012): a demonstration of members of Jobbik political party showing their racist challenge to an anti-racist and anti-hatred demonstration held by the Hungarian Socialist Party. The so-called Árpád-striped flag was also prominently exhibited at a location where Jews had been exterminated in large numbers during the Arrow Cross Regime.
- i) *ES v. Austria* (2019): a series of seminars entitled *Basic Information on Islam*. The seminars were advertised on the website of the right-wing Freedom Party Education Institute.

The above court cases share, in general terms, a similar context of situation: (a) the hate-advocating speaker is a member of a dominant group, (b) the addressees are members of the ingroup, but there may also be other types of recipients – e.g. overhearers, bystanders and eavesdroppers, (c) the target is a member of a

legally-protected group and (d) the contents are racist, anti-Semite or show religious intolerance. In addition, the communicative purposes are associated with disseminating, advocating or inciting hatred, hostility or violence against the members of a target group. Finally, it can be said that the lexicon, images and symbols employed by the hate-advocating speakers have collective salience for the ingroups.

Hate speech is not bound to a specific generic form. On the contrary, a variety of domain-specific genres are employed, such as protest speeches, demonstrations and parliamentary speeches (domain of politics); seminars (domain of education); press articles, press releases and TV interviews (domain of journalism). Besides, the genres employed by the hate-advocating speakers often include symbols that carry associations with a long history of hatred against the targets. For example, whereas burning crosses are hate symbols for African Americans, Swastikas are hate symbols for the Jewish people.

The genres employed in the aforementioned cases share three features: (1) they express authoritative discourse (O'Connor & Michaels 2007; Guzmán 2013), (2) they are persuasive forms of communication (van Dijk 2006a) and (3) they ensure the public dissemination of hate speech through mass media or the internet.

The above discussion shows that hate speech cannot be ascribed to a single genre identifiable by specific rhetorical conventions or textualised patterns. This difficulty in generic adscription makes the recognition and interpretation of hate speech challenging, especially for those who do not belong to the same speech community (the ingroup) and, what is more relevant, hate speech may pass unnoticed in the eyes of the law.

4.2 Genre as typified social action

Genre can be seen as social action embedded within disciplinary, professional and other institutional practices. Hence, what the participants in the speech event recognise, apart from a highly conventional rhetorical structure, is a specific *social action* (Giltrow 2013), a concept originally used by Miller in her seminal work on genre theory:

Genre refers to a conventional category of discourse based on a large scale typification of rhetorical action; as action, it acquires meaning from situation and from the social context in which that situation arose (Miller 1984: 163).

Drawing on Miller's approach to genre as *typified social action*, Giltrow claimed that a genre should be "known not only by its formal manifestation but also by its motive" (Giltrow 2017: 48–49). The same author further argued that in "each

situation, speech has cleared to a sphere of activity and has become characteristic of it” (Giltrow 2017: 49). From a wider social perspective, hate speech may, in effect, be associated with a specific sphere of negative social action, and it has become, over the years, characteristic of it, giving rise to what we know as *hate propaganda*.

5 Hate propaganda

Hate speech must be propagated to fuel hatred and hence incite hostility or violence against the members of a legally-protected group. The connection between hate speech and propaganda – a promotional genre – is clear. Hate propaganda may be categorised as a negative type of propaganda, because it promotes an ideology that incites prejudice and intolerance against the targets. Hate propaganda relates to adversarial communication, especially of a biased or misleading nature. It is designed to tap into people’s deepest values, fears, hopes and dreams for the purpose of influencing their emotions, attitudes, behaviour and opinions for the hate group’s benefit (cf. Chilton 2011). From a formal point of view, one of the characteristic features of hate propaganda, as is the case with any type of propaganda, is that it can operate in all genres. For this reason, hate propaganda is not bound to a particular rhetorical form. To illustrate the diverse genres that may be appropriated and exploited by hate-advocating speakers, I will examine some old and well-known genres employed in racist propaganda. Postcards were commonly used in racist propaganda against Asians in the US at the beginning of the 20th century. Figure 5.1 reproduces a postcard from 1907 depicting a demonised image of a Chinese person.

Nazi propaganda was orchestrated by Joseph Goebbels.¹⁰⁴ It is a well-known fact that the Nazis advocated clear messages tailored to a broad range of German people. These messages were intentionally and strategically designed to exploit and manipulate people’s fear of uncertainty and instability. Jews and communists featured heavily in the Nazi propaganda as enemies of the German people (Tsesis 2002: 11–27). Figure 5.2 illustrates Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. This two-dimensional work of art is a complex visual metaphor that dehumanises

104 In 1926, Joseph Goebbels was Gauleiter of Berlin. Later, in 1933, he was Reich Minister of Nazi propaganda.



Figure 5.1: A racist postcard: The Yellow Peril and a Chinese man by Fred C. Lounsbury (1907). Public domain.¹⁰⁵

Jews and vilifies the enemies of Nazi Germany. Specifically, the visual metaphor's topic (or subject) is the Jewish people, satirically portrayed as the wandering Jew. The vehicle (or element used metaphorically) is the image of a giant worm or parasite on the earth. The worm's eyes mirror two well-known symbols representing the enemies of Nazi Germany: the hammer and sickle, which symbolise the dangers of communism, and the dollar, which stands for capitalistic greed. The meaning of

105 The postcard text reads: "He's a Yellow Peril Chink of surprising versatility. And he stole into our country with astonishing facility; he'll washee-washee shirtee for the Melican Gentility. And sit with girls in Sunday School in studious humility. Ah Sin's the heathen's name." Fred C. Lounsbury, "He's a Yellow Peril Chink . . .," *Chinese Immigration in the Late 19th Century*. <http://projects.leadr.msu.edu/progressiveeraimmigration/items/show/16> (accessed July 28, 2022).

the metaphor is derived from the ground (the relationship between the topic and the vehicle): Jews are like vermin. Hence, they are a powerful threat to the world.



Figure 5.2: Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda at Yad Vashem. Faithful photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional, public domain work of art by David Shankbone.¹⁰⁶

Figure 5.3 shows a poster combining images and text. The text contests Pope Pius XI's assertion that the whole of humanity is a single great catholic race, arguing instead that racial difference is inherent. The text also suggests that mixed marriages are ignominious. The superiority of the Aryan race is conveyed by a partisan contrast between the fine pictures of a young German man and woman and the ugly pictures of three Black people in stereotypical roles: the African savage, the servant and the American soldier. The selected images illustrate racial difference and endorse white supremacy.

Apart from posters and postcards, Nazi hate propaganda appropriated, exploited and manipulated other generic forms, such as cartoons, pamphlets, books, speeches, radio and television broadcasts, legal norms and rules and literature, amongst others. Figure 5.4 displays some examples of Nazi racist literature.

¹⁰⁶ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fd/Nazi_Anti-Semitic_Propaganda_by_David_Shankbone.jpg



Figure 5.3: Racist propaganda of the Nazi regime. German magazine from the early 1940s. Unknown author. Public domain.¹⁰⁷

In sum, it has been shown that one of the characteristic features of hate propaganda is that it is not bound to a particular rhetorical form, but instead appropriates, exploits and manipulates other generic forms. None of the generic forms employed in hate propaganda was originally created to disseminate, advocate or incite hatred, hostility or violence against the members of a target group. In the next section, I will try to explain this phenomenon by looking at the concept of *genre-bending*.

¹⁰⁷ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fd/German_nazi_rasist_propaganda.jpg



Figure 5.4: Examples of Nazi racist literature. Photograph by Thomas Quine.¹⁰⁸

5.1 Genre-bending

Genre-bending occurs by appropriating generic resources from a specific genre to construct more dynamic or innovative generic forms (Bhatia 2014 [2004]: 99–127). In the specific case of hate propaganda, it was shown that hate propaganda does not fit neatly into a single and pure generic form. On the contrary, hate propaganda colonises other genres, a phenomenon that Bhatia called “invasion of territorial integrity” (Bhatia 2014 [2004]: 100). Hate propaganda has, in effect, invaded academic, corporate, political, journalistic and digital genres, displaying non-conventional uses of generic resources. Genre colonisation is possible because far from the general belief that genres are static, they are, in effect, characterised by *dynamism*, *innovation* and *versatility* (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995). Individuals or groups can manipulate generic conventions to communicate their private intentions within a genre’s socially recognised communicative purpose. It can

¹⁰⁸ Auf gut deutsch Wochenschrift für Ordnung u. Recht 1. Jahrgang 1919, Wilhelm Schmidt: Rasse und Volk, Hans F. K. Günther: Rassenkunde Europas. Munich City Museum (Münchner Stadtmuseum), Germany 2014.

then be argued that hate propaganda producers have knowledge about particular production processes, dissemination and consumption of genres (Fairclough 1992), because they select the genres that can help them best accomplish their malicious communicative purposes.

Genre colonisation may range from a relatively subtle appropriation of lexicogrammatical and discoursal resources to hybridisation, mixing and embedding of genres. Genre colonisation challenges genre integrity but, at the same time, shows the real complexity of human behaviour. Hate propaganda can be found in a wide array of genres and media – e.g. postcards, posters, pamphlets, protest speeches, demonstrations, journal articles, parliamentary speeches, radio broadcasts, TV interviews, websites and social networks. The genres that are plausible candidates for hate propaganda are those originally constructed to ensure dissemination or influence public opinion (see section 4.1 of this chapter). Every genre whose territorial integrity is invaded by hate propaganda becomes a product of genre-bending, because its original generic features have been appropriated, exploited and manipulated by individuals or groups to accomplish a set of communicative purposes other than those for which the genre was originally constructed. Genre-bending is illustrated in the racist postcard in Figure 5.1, the anti-Semitic poster in Figure 5.2, the racist poster in Figure 5.3, and the racist literature in Figure 5.4. In each of these examples, the territorial integrity of the original genres – the postcard, the poster and the book – has been invaded and colonised by racist and anti-Semitic hate speech propaganda. The original genres function as instruments of deception because they lure the recipient to the hate group or organisation. The postcard (Figure 5.1) conveys hate against Chinese Americans through caricature and satirical text. The first poster (Figure 5.2) disseminates hate against the Jewish people, presenting them, through visual metaphor and caricature, as vermin threatening the world. The second poster (Figure 5.3) disseminates white supremacy by displaying a racist text and endorsing racial differences through a partisan comparison between the images of two young Germans and three Africans in stereotypical roles: the African savage, the servant, and the African American soldier. Under the appearance of scientific literature, the collection of books on display in Figure 5.4 disseminate and promote white supremacy.

On taking a closer look at the genres employed in hate propaganda, one can also observe the propensity for innovation prompted by technological change. Unlike in the past, when the speaker was more likely to gather a crowd in a public place and distribute posters and pamphlets, most hate propaganda today occurs online (Marwick & Miller 2014; Assimakopoulos, Baider & Sharon 2018; Lumsden & Harmer 2019; Winter 2019; Udupa, Gagliardone & Hervik 2021), typically on a blog, social media, website or other applications. Giltrow (2017) pointed to the capacity of new technologies to transform old genres into new ones by

transposing them to new media or even providing bridges for genre formation when the new sphere of activity is consolidated (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright 2005). In addition, the digital age has given rise to new ways of disseminating propaganda worldwide. Algorithms are currently being used to create hate propaganda and spread it on social media, but they are also designed to detect it.¹⁰⁹

5.2 System of genre, textual chain, intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Apart from genre-bending, other interesting concepts that can improve the understanding of the inherent complexity of hate propaganda are those of *system of genre*, *textual chain*, *intertextuality* and *interdiscursivity*. Bazerman (1994) introduced the concept of system of genre to refer to a limited range of “interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings” (Bazerman 1994: 97). This generic interaction is done to establish the current act concerning prior acts. I concur with Bazerman that:

By understanding the genres available to us at any time, we can understand the roles and relationships open to us. Understanding generic decorum will let us know whether it is ours to ask or answer, argue or clarify, or declare or request (Bazerman 1994: 99).

For example, in a business transaction, the genre “placing an order” is established concerning prior acts expressed in generic form: giving a quotation, asking for a quotation, asking for samples on approval, making contact. Similarly, acknowledging receipt of the order, advising of despatch and making payment, amongst other limited range of genres, may appropriately follow upon placing an order to complete the business transaction. The concept of a system of genre throws light to the superstructure of the whole communicative event and the interaction between the parties involved.

109 In 2021, Naomi Nix and Lauren Etter drew attention to Facebook’s inaction to stop hate speech on the social network (*The Print*, 25 October 2021). <https://theprint.in/tech/facebook-knew-hate-speech-problem-was-bigger-than-it-disclosed-publicly/756379/> (accessed 31 January 2022). In the same year, Elizabeth Dwoskin, Nitasha Tiku and Craig Timberg brought to light the biased algorithm used by Facebook to detect racist-motivated hate speech on its social network at the expense of Black users (*The Washington Post*, 21 November 2021). In their view, although researchers had proposed a fix to the biased algorithm, this was rejected by conservative partners. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/11/21/facebook-algorithm-biased-race/> (accessed 31 January 2022).

The nature of hate propaganda does not establish a limited set of genres and acts that may, to a greater or lesser extent, appropriately follow in each situation. It is arguable then that the sequencing and consequences of acts expressed in generic forms may be harder to discern. The reason behind such loose structure lies in the fact that propaganda is not ascribed to any specific domain but, on the contrary, invades other domains and genres. The absence of a compact system of genre has important consequences for pragmatic analysis. As Bazerman (1994: 99) argues, since the illocutionary force-perlocutionary link is not preestablished, as it occurs in other specific-domain genres, it allows a wider array of perlocutionary effects (see Chapter 6 for further elaboration on the difficulty in prescribing the perlocutionary effects a hateful message may have).

Other useful concepts when analysing hate propaganda are those of textual chain, intertextuality and interdiscursivity. According to Reisigl and Wodak, a textual chain refers to:

the sequence or succession of thematically or/and functionally related texts, which is pre-shaped by the frame of particular configurations of conventionalised linguistic practices (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 79).

Text types in hate propaganda seem to establish intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between them that support the set of communicative purposes pursued by hate groups. Intertextual relations may be diverse: texts providing a context, texts within and around the text, texts referred to implicitly in the text, texts explicitly referred to in the text, texts embedded within the text, texts mixed with the text and quotations. Some hate groups follow a strategic transmission pattern to recruit people, indoctrinate them and incite hatred, hostility or violence against the members of a target group. This process may begin with a simple transmission, such as a profile or an online comment. Generally, these messages will contain instructions for obtaining more information via a website or any other application. The individual will then find pictures, texts, recordings and films, amongst other possibilities. The strategy is intended to initiate the individual from information recipient into the role of information seeker through reinforcement, and then from information seeker to opinion leader through indoctrination. It is through the transmission of hate speech that the seeds of hatred are planted in a person's mind. It is just a matter of time for the seeds to grow, and the person starts showing hostility and even, sometimes, performs violent acts against the targets.

Some of the court cases associated with hate speech in section 4.1 provide illustrative examples of textual chains, intertextuality and interdiscursivity. In *Jersild v. Denmark* (1994), the textual chain is made up of two journalistic genres that interact with each other: an article published in the serious press

describing the racist attitudes of the Greenjackets in Østerbro (Copenhagen) and a television interview of some members of the same racist group, which contributed to the mass dissemination of their racist views. In *A. v. The United Kingdom* (2003), the textual chain consists of a parliamentary speech (political genre) on municipal housing policy delivered in the House of Commons and a press release (journalistic genre) of the same parliamentary speech. As in the preceding case, both genres interact, the press release contributing to the mass dissemination of the hate remarks embedded in the parliamentary speech. In *United States v. Wilcox* (2008), the textual change comprises profiles (digital genre) posted on an internet platform and a website (digital genre) associated with white supremacy ideologue David Lane. As in the other cases, both genres interact and foster the broad dissemination of racist messages. In *ES v. Austria* (2019), the textual chain includes a series of seminars entitled *Basic Information on Islam* (academic genre) and the website of a right-wing political organisation (digital promotional genre) that ensures the dissemination of such seminars.

On the other hand, in other cases, intertextuality and interdiscursivity are more implicit. For example, in both *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969) and *Virginia v. Black* (2003), the textual chain comprises a speech delivered by Klan leaders and the public display of burning crosses. The image of the burning cross evokes the discourse of racist violence against African Americans and two inter-related genres, Dixon's novel *The Clansman* (1905) and Griffith's film *The Birth of a nation* released in 1915, based on Dixon's referred novel (see Chapter 4).

In *Fáber v. Hungary* (2012), the textual change incorporates a racist demonstration of members of Jobbik and the display of the Árpád-striped flag at a site where Jews had been exterminated in large numbers during the Arrow Cross Regime. The image of the Árpád-striped flag at such a place may invoke anti-Semitism and the fascist discourse of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party, a Nazi puppet government in place for seven months (October 1944–April 1945) in Hungary.

5.3 Hate propaganda as super genre

The concept of genre colony – that is, the grouping of closely related genres – serves two important functions in genre theory. First, it allows genres to be viewed at various levels of generalisation, making it possible to differentiate between super or macro-genres, genres and sub-genres. Second, it also makes it possible to relate these subcategories to contextual features (Bhatia 2014 [2004]).

Hate propaganda may be said to appropriate, manipulate and exploit “an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular

sphere develops and becomes more complex” (Bakhtin 1986: 60). In an attempt to bring some order to the apparent chaos of hate propaganda, I argue that the genres contained in the repertoire may be considered *sub-genres*. These can be grouped under the umbrella of a *super genre*: hate propaganda. The sub-genres form a genre colony because, despite their generic differences, they are geared to the same sphere of activity and share the same set of communicative purposes: to disseminate, advocate or incite hatred, hostility or violence against the members of a target group. The sub-genres are likely to differ in several other respects, such as their disciplinary affiliations, contexts of situation, and especially in their audience constraints (Tenor), topics (Field) and rhetorical conventions (Mode). Table 5.1 below depicts the genre colony represented by hate propaganda. Far from being exhaustive, the genre list below is meant to give a general idea of hate propaganda as a dynamic, innovative and versatile super genre that crosses disciplines, genres, means of expression and media.

Table 5.1: Hate propaganda as super genre: Colony of hate speech genres.

–	Written genres
	Postcard
	Poster
	News item
	Academic or professional publication
	Legal norm, statute, act
	Lyrics
	[. . .]
–	Visual genres
	Caricature
	Photograph
	Picture
	Graffiti
	[. . .]
–	Oral genres (onsite or broadcast through mass media)
	Protest speech at a rally
	Parliamentary speech
	Interview
	[. . .]

Table 5.1 (continued)

–	Audiovisual genres
	Film
	Performance
	Video
	[. . .]
–	Internet genres
	Text messages
	Blog
	Tweet
	Website
	Social networks conversation
	[. . .]

5.4 The genre integrity of hate propaganda

According to Bhatia, *genre integrity* refers to

a socially constructed typical constellation of form-function correlations representing a specific professional, academic or institutional communicative construct realising a specific communicative purpose of the genre in question (Bhatia 2014 [2004]: 142).

A genre, then, has been successfully constructed if it serves the communicative goals for which it was constructed. I claim that, in the case of hate propaganda, the super genre has generic integrity, but that this has a special nature for varied reasons. First, it is complex because it reflects genre-bending, resulting in hybridisation, mixing, or embedding of two or more generic forms. Second, it is dynamic because it reflects a gradual development over the years prompted by the advent of new technologies. Third, it is versatile because it can accommodate its communicative purposes to the given circumstances. Fourth, it has a recognisable generic character for the members of the speech community.

5.5 The power of hate propaganda

According to Bhatia (2014 [2004]), academic and professional communities can express their communicative intentions and meet their goals by using the same set of genres repeatedly and over time. The recurrent use of a range of genres contributes to “solidarity within its membership, giving them their most powerful weapon to keep outsiders at a safe distance” (Bhatia 2014 [2004]: 223). Although

Bhatia discussed the *power of genre* in academic and professional discourses, I attempt to demonstrate that that power can be equally relevant in the context of hate propaganda.

As a super genre, hate propaganda contributes to building cohesion within the members of the ingroup. As in the case of academic and professional communities, the power of genre in a hate group involves knowledge that is accessible only to its membership. This knowledge comprises both text-internal and text-external aspects (cf. Bhatia 2014 [2004]: 147–151).

On the one hand, text-internal aspects relate to knowledge about the appropriate register (the context of situation, lexico-grammar and rhetorical conventions) and intertextuality. On the other hand, text-external aspects concern three types of knowledge: (1) *genre appropriacy*, (2) *genre construction* and (3) *disciplinary culture*. First, knowledge about genre appropriacy allows the hate group to choose the most convenient genres for hate propaganda. Second, knowledge about genre construction allows experienced members of the hate group to produce, use and interpret hate propaganda conveniently. Third, knowledge about disciplinary culture allows experienced members of the hate group to exploit and manipulate generic conventions to express the group's communicative intentions within the context of specific social activities. As Bhatia (2014 [2004]) claimed, the power of genre also relates to the capacity to innovate and create novel generic forms. One of the most noticeable characteristics of hate propaganda, as earlier mentioned, is its dynamism and capacity to innovate.

Genre knowledge must be shared between the producers of hate propaganda and the intended audience. In other words, for hate propaganda to be successful, the generic forms used to express the hateful messages must match the intended audience's expectations. This match is possible only when all the participants in the speech event share the code and the genre knowledge, including the knowledge about its construction, use and interpretation. Whereas the shared genre knowledge builds cohesion and homogeneity within the ingroup, it creates a social distance between those considered legitimate members of the hate group (the ingroups) and those considered outsiders (the outgroups or targets). This social distance may result in negative consequences for the outgroups because they do not have access to the necessary shared background knowledge and, thereby, may be unable to defend themselves from verbal assault or bring a claim against the perpetrators. In addition, the triers of fact may fail to interpret the hateful messages appropriately, as they may not always be aware of the linguistic resources and tools used to create hate propaganda.

6 Conclusions

This chapter analysed the texts in which hate speech is likely to manifest itself, their register and complex generic forms. It was explained that hatred must be linguistically encapsulated in texts that make hateful expressions and acts durable over time. As a result, the hate text production situation and the hate text reception situation may not be adjacent in space and time. Thus, the imminence standard (see Chapters 2 and 3) may be, in effect, difficult to assess, especially after the advent of online hate speech.

After analysing hate speech through the lens of register theory, I conclude that, in theory, a hate register may be described through the elements of the context of situation: Tenor, Field and Mode. Specifically, the Tenor may be indicative of a hate register when the participants of the speech event are: (1) the hate-advocating speaker (the saviour), (2) the ingroup (the victims), (3) the outgroup (the dangerous threat) and (4) the overhearers, bystanders or eavesdroppers. The Field may indicate a hate register when the text contains, amongst other things, fallacies about the moral inferiority or non-humanity of the outgroups and false statements of fact harming their dignity and social reputation. Although the rhetorical mode of a hate text may be characteristically manipulative, it is important to note that its forms of expression are less definite because of the varied channels of communication and forms the hate-advocating speaker may appropriate, manipulate and exploit. A hate register may also be described for the set of malicious communicative purposes it pursues. This set of communicative purposes may not always be easily determined when conveyed implicitly and indirectly (see Chapters 6 and 8). As a result of the increasing criminalisation of hate speech worldwide, the hate-advocating speaker will tend to convey hate speech implicitly and indirectly. Indirectness evades automatic computer detection even though it is recognisable by the audience it addresses. In looking at the success rate of natural processing (NLP) in detecting hate speech, Knoblock (2022: 4) claims that NPL still has a lower success rate (60%) when the messages are covert than when they are overt (80%).

Hate groups can appropriate, manipulate and exploit wide-ranging ideologically-based linguistic features, and use them as verbal weapons to propagate hate and instigate hostility or violence towards the members of a target group. In this chapter, several arguments were tabled to reject the hypothesis that a hate register may be described for the pervasive (statistically significant) linguistic features in the text. First, proposing a closed catalogue or inventory of pervasive linguistic features may be fruitless because these may vary from one genre to another. Second, it may be scientifically inaccurate to establish a correlation between a word's high frequency of occurrence in a text with its status as a hate

register linguistic feature because words not present in a high-frequency list may be as relevant as those present (cf. Brindle 2016; Ruziate 2018; Technau 2018).

By contrast, the present author supported the idea that the collective salience of a linguistic feature seems to be a more accurate indicator of a hate register. A linguistic feature may have collective salience when it is prominent – that is, when it has the power to invoke social prejudice, hostility or violence against a target group. Such power derives from the ideas, beliefs, views and attitudes the speaker shares with the intended audience (the ingroup). Arguably, the collective salience of the linguistic features of a hate register may be sometimes invisible in the eyes of the law unless the judge or jury is familiar with the particular hate group register. Consequently, hate-advocating speakers may elude legal responsibility and profit from impunity.

This chapter also analysed hate speech through the lens of genre theory. Hate speech cannot be ascribed to a pure genre identifiable by specific rhetorical conventions or textualised patterns. The problem of generic adscription makes hate speech recognition and interpretation difficult, especially for those who do not belong to the same speech community. By contrast, from a wider social perspective, hate speech may, in effect, be associated with a specific sphere of negative activity that has become characteristic of it, giving rise to what we know as hate propaganda. It was argued that hate propaganda might be categorised as a super genre encompassing an entire repertoire of hybrid sub-genres (a genre colony). Hate propaganda illustrates the phenomenon of genre-bending, which would not be possible if it were not for the fact that hate-advocating speakers have both text-internal and text-external knowledge. This knowledge helps them select the most convenient domains and genres to achieve their malicious communicative purposes.

Another interesting insight given by genre theory is that the superstructure (the system of genre) of hate propaganda is not preestablished. Therefore, the illocutionary force-perlocutionary link between the acts expressed in generic forms and their perlocutionary effects is unpredictable (see Chapter 6). Despite the loose system of genre exhibited by hate propaganda, I argued that it has genre integrity, although complex due to its dynamism and versatility.