Positioning in Scholarship Applications:
On the intercultural pragmatics of an academic genre

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Abstract:
This article discusses the presentation of self and others in scholarship applications to German institutions by applicants from foreign countries. My data consist of a collection of applications by graduates, doctoral candidates and post-doctoral university teachers from Caucasian and Central Asian countries that were formerly Soviet republics (but not from Russia). I combine text and genre analysis, politeness and positioning theory (Davies/Harré 1990) and place my study within intercultural pragmatics. I found institutionally problematic or unsuitable positionings in a third of the applications from the social sciences and humanities. I discuss various text segments that, among other things, show difficulties in handling explicitness and implicitness in the communication of specialist competence. In segments where reasons for the choice of a guest university should be presented, Germany is often positioned as the helper of the applicant's country. Scientific communities will be viewed as "communities of practice" in which standards of self- and other-representation are learned. The scholarship appl. genre displays the hegemonic division lines in international science; it is evident that the applications were submitted by persons with far less chance of participating in international science than students from the USA, Australia, New Zealand or Western and Northern Europe.[1]

1. Research on academic writing

The academic world employs text-cultural standards for its written exchanges and qualification procedures that differ from journalistic or artistic standards. Over the past thirty years, a broad discussion has unfolded in the text sciences on the culturality of academic discourses (Ventola/Mauranen 1996, Auer/Baßler 2006). After Johan Galtung (1985) reflected impressionistically on Saxon, Teutonic, Gallic and Nipponese scientific styles, scholars have begun to analyze various sorts of academic texts in a cultural-comparative way. We know that there are considerable cultural differences already in the transmission of academic writing standards (Cmejrkova 1996). Whereas, e.g., in the "Anglo-Saxon area" universities commonly offer courses in "academic writing," in the "Teutonic area" (to which Eastern Europe is also assigned) the attitude is more that: (1.) students demonstrate their talent precisely by being able to deduce the applicable standards on their own, and (2.) these should be kept flexible. A few studies do indeed show a higher structural variance in German academic articles than in English ones (Hutz 1997 on articles in the discipline of social-psychology). In any case, researchers agree that the rhetorical structure of scientific qualification works or publications is not simply a reflection of their content. Citation, the presentation of the current state of work in the discipline and of one's own achievements, maintaining contacts with experts in the field, with open disciplinary questions, supplementary information, etc. are (disciplinarily) culturally standardized with varying degrees of flexibility. Clyne (1987), for example, concluded that German authors structure their articles for academic journals in a more thematically digressive way than do English

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[1] This article is based on Kotthoff 2009

authors.[2] The ideals of comprehensibility and explicitness are different in that German writers tend to assign the reader more responsibility for deciphering their texts, while authors from the English speaking world tend to be held responsible for this. There are also other stylistic differences. Gnutzmann (1991) showed for example that German articles use far more passive constructions than English ones.

In the German-speaking academic world, we observe with, among others Graefen (1994), an increasing adoption of Anglo-American text standards. In the natural sciences, articles in international journals are usually written in English (Ammon 2001). The spread of standardized text formats is closely linked to the rise of empirical methods in the natural sciences and, due to their historical development, the formats are oriented to Anglo-Saxon academic communication practices (Moessner 2006).

In the social sciences and humanities, there are differences even within individual disciplines. Skudlik (1990) recognizes a line of demarcation respectively between a natural scientific or social scientific orientation that runs through the middle of disciplines, e.g., within the discipline of psychology.

The anglicization of publication policy and the resulting hegemonic structuring of scientific fields in favor of English speakers are laden with problems that are likewise being widely debated (e.g., in linguistics Ammon 2001, Ehlich 1997, 2000)

There have been studies of specific cultural practices of self- and other-positioning in academic text types (Ivanic 1998, Gosden 1995). This involves, for example, attributions of authority, alignments with colleagues, and displays of deference. These procedures are relevant not only for the direct dialogicity of the spoken language (e.g. at conferences), but also for the distance communication of scientific writing. How, for example, does the author position his contribution in relation to previous research? Does he claim to be merely adding a mosaic stone or instead revolutionizing a subject area? What are the disciplinary standards for justifying such claims? There are many questions that necessitate a cultural comparative analysis of academic text types.

In this article, I discuss a genre that, in my view, has received too little attention: the scholarship application. In particular, I analyze *positioning strategies* and their cultural particularities, taking situated, authentic discourses as a starting point and approaching them phenomenologically. I aim thereby to reconstruct the logics of academic communities of practice as they are revealed in texts.

2. The scholarship application

Scholarship applications are submitted in the form of written texts, and applicants are expected to attach certain required documents such as the curriculum vitae, recommendations and grade transcripts. Insofar we are dealing with sets of interrelated texts. In this type of text the cultural maxim of personal modesty ("self-praise stinks") is suspended – as with job applications (Birkner 1999). To dwell upon one's talents and achievements serves a legitimate purpose here. As we will see, applicants approach this in various ways, using genre-specific intertextuality. Among the genre's particular demands for coherence is that the applicant's explicit or implicit positive self-representation be optimally supported by positive other-representations by the selected advisor and above all by recommending professors from home universities. This quite specific constellation of various interrelated text types is an important feature of the scholarship application genre. Applications for positions and scholarships

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[2] Duszak (1997) showed digressions from the central thematic lines in Polish articles.

presuppose certificates of education and degrees that in most countries must be documented (e.g., by grade reports). Academic accomplishments serve as proofs of qualifications and are attached to the application, thereby speaking for themselves. Besides this, many application forms contain headings under which the applicant can present her project, interests, research focus, preferences, and also her perspective on the supervising institution. My particular interest here is in how the persons relevant within the genre position themselves with regard to each other: the applicant, the scholarship grantor, the home advisor and the advisor from the German university.

A German scholarship granting institution has generously placed at my disposal 132 applications for scholarships, which make up the data for my study.[3] They were submitted in the course of several months for the postgraduate programs of German universities. The applications were submitted by persons from the natural sciences, social sciences and liberal arts living in the former Caucasian republics and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. A good 85% of the natural scientific applications are in English; of the others, about 90% are in German (10% in English). Both are foreign languages for the applicants. In half of the applications, we encounter both German and English texts, because the recommending professors do not necessarily write in the language used by the applicants. In both languages, we definitely find grammatical deficiencies at a relatively high linguistic level that do not, however, reduce their understandability and are not dealt with in this article.

The applicants outline their research plans and thereby give reasons for spending several months or even years in Germany. Above all in the outline of the research plan the applicant's degree of knowledge of the subject, the originality and relevance of the research interests, her familiarity with the relevant standards in Germany, her amount of contact with German advisors and other aspects become manifest. Grade reports and proof of German language competence are attached. Furthermore, the applicant presents a more or less detailed and understandable working plan for a stay in Germany. The applicant answers questions on the application form, as well as stating her professional goals. Almost all of the 132 applicants want to continue working in their field; a few, based on their jobs and publications, have already tenured positions at academic institutions.

In general, the applications from students of natural-sciences and engineering are closer in their standards and text styles to the prevailing disciplinary practices in Western countries such as Germany than are the applications from the social sciences and humanities. It is noteworthy that even in the socialist period Eastern European natural scientists had closer contacts with Western discourse communities than scholars in the social sciences and humanities. Natural scientific discourse is also more highly standardized at an international level (Danneberg/Niederhauser 1998). Busch-Lauer (2006) describes, e.g., the strict textual standards required by medical journals. In general, the ideological demarcation from the West had greater effects on Eastern European social and cultural studies; above all empirical social research was hardly in the interest of the socialistic states and could accordingly develop only to a limited extent (see Breitkopf 2006 for the development of Russian sociology). Insofar we must expect deficiencies in the representation of cultural and social scientific methods, and I can say in advance that this hypothesis is confirmed by my analysis of the applications.

The scholarship genres display the hegemonic division lines in international science; it is evident that the applications were submitted by persons with far less chance of participating in international science than students from the USA, Australia, New Zealand or Western

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[3] I thank in particular B. Brisch.

Europe. National differences in research facilities and resources create internationally unequal access to scientific discourse, which privileges scientists from wealthier countries (resulting in an unequal distribution of power and status) and also affects concrete research cooperation (Weidemann 2006). Researchers from the Caucasus and the Central Asiatic republics are disadvantaged not only linguistically, but also through the poor facilities of their universities, making it very difficult to keep up with developments in their discipline (Kotthoff 2002a). It remains to be seen whether publications in the Internet will improve this situation in the future.

In the following section, I first summarize the particularities of the scholarship application genre in which the applicant's self-positioning and her positioning of her German supporters is carried out. Then I briefly discuss positioning theory. Positionings are context-tied indexicalizations of social categories in relationship to each other. After that, I will focus on the other-positioning of the applicants through the recommendations of professors from their home universities.

2. 1. Text parts of the application

Every application contains as its centerpiece a not formally pre-structured text in which the applicant presents her field and research or study plan. In this text, three areas should be found that Swales (1990), on the basis of corpus analyses, has identified for English scientific article abstracts:

1. Establishing a territory
2. Establishing a niche
3. Occupying the niche

The Anglo-American discourse tradition expects authors to immediately orient readers; therefore, such a tripartite structure serves a purpose. This is less the case in the traditions of the German-speaking countries and even less so in Eastern Europe, but we expect that applicants will include these three "moves" (as Swales calls them) somewhere in their proposals. Busch-Lauer (2006) discerned greater variations in German language abstracts and further specified the "moves." I also found variations in the "moves" in different text segments of scholarship applications, and in any case applicants establish their own thematic niches.

For the analysis of the main parts of the applications, I draw on the concepts used for the analysis of scientific publications by Hermann Oldenburg (1992), Anne Oldenburg (1995) and Busch-Lauer (2006), who identify and abstract text parts . Text parts are, according to A. Oldenburg (1995: 111), "relatively autonomous substantive functional units within the text whose beginning and respectively end … can be shown through structuring signals." Similar to Busch-Lauer in her analysis of article abstracts, in the applications we have marked various text segments of the research plan, specified their function, abstracted and then later compared them. With regard to the "aims and consequences" segment, we can of course only analyze the stated expectation. In contrast to the abstract of an article, the applicant must also indicate how well she has already become acquainted with her research questions and why she prefers to work with a particular advisor at a particular university.

We can expect to find the following text part segments (not necessarily in this order):

1. Characterization of the research field and of the project
2. Own competence and level of preparation
3. Main goal of one's research/stay
4. Methods, data basis
5. Working plan, intended aims
6. Expected consequences for research and/or practice
7. Reasons for the choice of the university and the advisor

In Segment 1, applicants must specify a territory in Swales' sense, including the applicant's personal *niche*. We actually do find this in the applications, but with differences in quantity and quality. Many present the state of research, often in connection with describing the situation in their country, which is sometimes functional within segment 1. Segment 3 corresponds to the occupation of the niche.

With the natural scientific scholarship applications (a good 65% of the applications) it is conspicuous that text segments 1, 3 and 7 are always realized, and text parts 4 and 5 almost always. In area 2 applicants can let references and evaluations speak for themselves. The applicants often assign national significance to their main goal, which in many cases could be realistic. – For example, the applicant may want to familiarize himself with the latest technology for the desalination of salt water which his home country lacks, or she may want to contribute to the struggle against specific heart diseases and needs familiarity with medical technology that her country will only acquire in the future. The application is thus stylized into a request for national developmental assistance. I wish to emphasize that I certainly do not deny the truth and sincerity of these requests. However, such communication can facilitate an interpretation that contextualizes the relationship between the applicant and the scholarship grantor as one between a possible helper of his country and a foreign institution able to determine whether the applicant can perform this role in the future. This may very well be the case, but facts alone do not guarantee the success of a communication. Rather, discursive typifications must be created that are shared with others and that can be established as accepted foundations for practice (Berger/Luckmann 1967). 2.2. Problematic Positionings in the Motivational Section of the Application

In the first text segment, thus in the characterization of their working area, some applicants offer generalized praise of German achievements that is remote from the dominant subject orientation of scientific practice in the West.

Examples from the first text part (reproduced exactly as written)[4]:
1.
Wir wissen, dass zur Entwicklung Deutschlands gab es grosse Beitraege der grossen Politiker, Wissenschaftler, Schriftsteller und Dichter. Man kann die geistliche Vervollkommnung ohne Geschichte nicht erreichen. Meine wissenschaftliche Untersuchung in den Jahren 2003-05 zeigte mir (ich untersuchte das Werk „XXXXt" von AB und lernte seine Philosophie), dass die Idee der Deutschen Philosophen zur Zeit auch nicht fremd sind.
English Translation: *We know that to Germany's development there were great contributions by great politicians, scientists, writers and poets. One can not achieve intellectual perfection*

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[4] I have copied all the text examples exactly as in the original with no corrections or stylistic improvements, but for the sake of maintaining anonymity I omit the name, country of origin and to a great extent the subject areas.

without history. My scientific study in the years 2003/05 showed me (I examined the work "XXXXt" by AB and learned his philosophy), that the idea of the German philosophers at the time are also not foreign.

2.

It is very important for X-country to prolong and expand scientific relationship with German side and it is essential to step into new stage which covers preparation of highly qualified specialists. It is difficult to achieve it without fulfilment of my planned study project. (English original)

3.

Collaborating with German colleagues is very significant for y-data processing; it is very important to prepare high qualified specialist. Only after this project realization I will be able to analyze data independently without any help of German colleague. Hereby AAA will support me to become a good scientist. (English original)

4.

Es wäre mir auch eine Ehre eine Stipendiatin von weltweit bekannte Organisation wie dem AAA zu werden.
English translation: *It would also be an honor for me to become a scholarship recipient of worldwide known organization like the AAA.*

In general, these applicants position their German colleagues as outstanding specialists with whom they would very much like to study. A few state explicit thanks and sing the praises of the AAA (pseudonym for the organization) as an internationally known institution from which they would be honored to receive support. In many cultures, people regard it as polite to express extreme humility and flatter others, as we find here. The applicants praise the AAA and their German colleagues in the sense of "face work" (Goffman 1967), but run the risk of positioning themselves in ways unsuitable to the genre, because the scope of the praise is too broadly conceived. Instead of "collaborating with German colleagues …," applicants should concretely refer to the persons with whom they wish to study. Generalized praise of German institutions and experts is not expected and does not reveal intimate knowledge of the working area in Germany. In the "motivation" section good knowledge of the German university and the supervising professors works would function as indirect praise and at the same time communicate expert knowledge. There are indications that in Eastern Europe, as well in the natural scientific fields, stronger modesty ideals are accepted than in the West (Stanescu 2003).

There is no need to affirm a desire to become a specialist so explicitly, because one can better suggest this implicitly by naming disciplinary interests and competencies. Explicitness and implicitness in the attribution of specialist ability lead to different estimates of competency on the side of German application evaluators.[5] Within this genre, explicitly proclaiming the goal of becoming a specialist violates the Gricean maxim of quantity (1985). With future scholarship recipients we naturally assume this goal anyway. Unfortunately, it indexicalizes that the writer can still not adequately perform as a candidate for an expert position. – What the applicant cannot imply in the application by revealing expertise he must explicitly state.

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[5] The AAA allowed me to take part in various selection commities where I was able to take field notes about the argumentation of the professors who decided about the success of the application.

In different parts of many applications we find overly broadly expressed praise of German scholars and the positioning of the AAA as an internationally influential organization, which unfortunately does not frame the expert discourse in which the application is supposed to function.

2.3. Positioning framework

Since we are dealing here chiefly with how self- and other-positioning is realized in applications, I will briefly clarify the concept of positioning. Positioning theory has been described as an "analytic tool that can be used flexibly to describe the shifting multiple relations in a community of practice" (Linehan & McCarthy 2000, 441). One can see the sciences as such "communities" – with multiple relations and different access possibilities – socially present, but discursively actualized. According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999), positioning theory is anchored in social constructivism, which emphasizes that people employ a historically developed cultural repertoire in order to position themselves in their discourses in relation to others, similar to the character constellations in dramas. Positionings are made as triads of mutually linked concepts: In their interactions actors create identity attributions (storylines), quasi as a metaphorical drama. They perform actions that are interpreted in connection with the resulting identity attributions. The actions of various actors can be more or less consistent or conflicting (constellations).

Back to Datum 3 as an example: The problematic attribution to oneself of an identity as a person in need of aid creates a setting of development assistance. In this positioning framework, the scholarship is now morally loaded (will the organization help me or not?). Each positioning act has aspects directed at the other actors.

In institutional discourses in general and in the academic world in particular, where scholarship applications play a role, the general structure of positions is to a high degree determined in advance. Institutional discourses are goal oriented, subject to special norms, and also to specific role sets that, however, must be contextualized (Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford 2005, 9). In framing a novice-expert-relationship, one can emphasize either content or morality. In contrast to many everyday conversations, where role constellations vary locally, it is in scholarship discourses more or less clear which activities and positionings support goal achievement. The applicants must establish that their project will be productive for the discipline and can be successfully implemented at the chosen university abroad. In their recommendations, the recommending professors affirm that the applicants are above average in talent, preparation, motivation and productivity, and so-to-speak vouch with their names for a successful investment of resources and thereby also for the continuity and coherence of the project over a longer period of time.

For the overall analysis of the genre, with its internal and external structure, positioning analyses should enrich politeness analyses, whereby both can well be combined. Goffman (1967) defines "face work" as "communicating a line," which comes very close to the "storyline" of Davies/Harré (1990). Linguistic politeness research has so far done less to conceptualize the processes of identity attribution in social frameworks than has positioning theory (Kotthoff 2002b).

2.4. Inadequate self-positioning in applications from social sciences and humanities

Overall, there are much greater differences in the quality of applications from cultural studies and social sciences than in the quality of natural scientific ones. With a third of the applications from social sciences and humanities, it is conspicuous that the characterization of the research area is so extensive and so broad that these are not only rejected, but even elicit amazement.[6]

A few applicants do not position themselves in the institutionally expectable identity of a future scientist, but rather portray themselves, for example, as an early lover of German literature or sing hymns of praise to an author whose relationship to German literature they want to research. They thereby choose the wrong "storyline."

From this problematic third, I present passages that are out of place in the application genre:

5.
Fuer die uralte deutsche Sprache, Literatur, die deutsche Kultur, fuer Sitten und Braeuche des deutschen Volkes interessiere ich mich seit der Schulzeit. Ich begann schon damals kleine Gedichte der deutschen Schriftsteller zu lesen und auswendig zu lernen. Damals arbeitete noch in dieser Schule ein erfahrener Deutschlehrer, der sehr schoen dichtete. Er brachte mir diese schwere Kunst bei…
English translation: *I have been interested in the ancient German language, literature, the German culture, in customs and practices of the German people since my school days. I began already then to read and memorize short poems by German authors. At that time an experienced German teacher worked in this school who wrote very beautifully. He taught me this difficult art …*

6.
AB, who studied in Berlin, compared the x-ian poet Y with Shakespeare after he has read the Y's poetry collection „cccc": „Ich habe cccc vielmals gelesen, dann Shakespeare gelesen. Beide ähneln einander. Zuletzt scheint mir, als ob Y Shakespeare sei oder Shakespeare Y.
English translation: *I have many times read cccc then read Shakespeare. Both resemble each other. In the end it appears to me as though Y is Shakespeare or Shakespeare Y.*

Ausgehend von den obengesagten Meinungen möchten wir den Wert auf deutsch-xische literarische Beziehungen legen…
English translation: *Starting from the above stated opinions, we would like to place value on German-x-ian literary relationships …*

Author 5 assumes that she has to prove herself to be a lover of German poetry in order to obtain support from a German organization. Author 6 elevates the poet he wants to deal with to the level of Shakespeare. Both describe how they personally came into contact with a particular literature and learned to value it. Such personal essays are interesting, but are not typical of the specialist discourse practiced in the German or English speaking academic world. These applicants have never studied at a Western university.

2.5. Germany as aid-giver to the applicant's country

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[6] I was allowed to take part in some commission meetings, in which the applications were discussed which form the basis of this article.

Above all, in text part 7, in which the applicant names the institution where he wants to study and explains why, the applicants position Germany and/or the supervising institution and/or the advisor – and again not specifically enough**:**

Here are a few examples justifying the choice of the institution to study at and the particular preferred advisor:

7.

Ich sehe die Lösung des Problems nur in der Zusammenarbeit mit anderen entwickelten Ländern, welche immer bereit sind, X zu helfen. Deutschland ist ein Land, welches seit vielen Jahren hilft. Ich kenne heute viele x-ische Wissenschaftler, welche zur Zeit in X wohnen und arbeiten, aber mit deutscher Hilfe Wissenschaftler in Deutschland geworden sind. Schon mehr als 10 Jahre gibt die AAA den x-ischen Studenten und Wissenschaftlern eine solche Hilfe. Das ist eine Entwicklungshilfe für unser Land.

English translation: *I see the solution of the problem only in cooperation with other developed countries that are always ready to aid X. Germany is a country that helps for many years. I know today many s-ian scientists who at the time live and work in X, but have become scientists with German aid in Germany. Already more than 10 years the AAA gives x-ian students and scientists such help. That is a development assistance for our country.*

8.

Die Entwicklung einer guten Zusammenarbeit mit den deutschen C-Spezialisten seit Anfang der 90er Jahren ist eine grosse Errungenschaft der deutsch-xischen Zusammenarbeit. Diese Zusammenarbeit umfasst verschiedene Bereiche, darunter auch Forschungsaufenthalte der xischen Doktoranden und Nachwuchswissenschaftler an deutschen Universitäten und Forschungsinstituten. […] Auch das xische C-Denken ist am deutschen Vorbild orientiert.

English translation: *The development of good cooperation with German C specialists since the start of the 90s is a great achievement of German-x-ian cooperation. This cooperation encompasses various areas, among them also research stays of x-ian doctoral candidates and next generation scientists at German universities and research institutes. … Also x-ian C-thinking is oriented to the German model.*

9.

In Deutschland hätte ich die Möglichkeit, für mein Dissertationsthema nicht nur die wissenschaftlichen Materialien zu sammeln, sondern auch mich mit der Gerichtspraxis auf dem Gebiet des XY vertraut zu machen. Das würde meine Dissertation in bedeutender Masse inhaltlich bereichern und dazu beitragen, dass das Dissertation nicht obeflächliche, sondern eine gründliche wissenschaftliche Forschung wird. Durch die Anwendung der grossen wissenschaftlichen, intellelektuellen und materiell-technischen Basis, die es in Deutschland besteht, wird die Ausführung der Dissertationsarbeit auf dem hohen Niveau gefördert.

English translation: *In Germany I would have the chance not only to collect the scientific materials for my dissertation topic, but also to become familiar with judicial practice in the area of XY. This would enrich the content of my dissertation to a significant degree and contribute to my dissertation becoming not superficial, but thorough scientific research. Through the application of the great scientific, intellectual and material-technical basis that exists in Germany, the carrying out of my dissertation work will be furthered on a high niveau.*

As well in excerpts 7, 8 and 9, the applicants again frame academic support as development assistance. They establish their own country or field of work as deficient and needy. Metaphorically expressed, in the applications the second and third worlds come knocking at the door of the first in hopes of receiving charity.

A framework of professional relationships is thus hardly indexicalized. Even generalized praise of Germany de-professionalizes the discourse. In the background, the concept of socialistic brotherly support may be detected. In the Soviet period, Russia granted many scholarships to students from other Soviet republics. Praise of the "Great Brother" and its achievements was usual. Instead of such a practice, it is in Western academic institutions of great importance for the applicant to reveal knowledge of an advisor's works. Thereby she positions herself within a scholarly frame and at the same time implicitly expresses respect in regard to her future advisor. Nor does the applicant have to state explicitly that his or her dissertation should not be superficial. All participants in this process assume this anyway.

2.6. Positioning of the applicant in recommendations

Within the genre, applicants are also positioned by others. Included with the applications of postgraduates are the already mentioned evaluations by professors from home universities, who likewise answer various questions, e.g., about how the applicant stands out. Almost all the evaluators claim that the applicant is among the top 5% of students; thus positioning him/her as a peak candidate. They name further positive characteristics, such as general engagement with the research topic and industriousness. The positioning includes personal qualities ("decides all problems," see below), role conditioned (highly qualified) and moral characteristics (industrious and hard-working), usually with overlaps.

Examples of answers to Question 3 of the home university recommenders "How does the applicant stand out in terms of the subject and personally, and how do you evaluate her/his potential. ...**:"**
10.
Sie ist sehr fleissig und arbeitsam und gibt sich ihrem Thema vollständig hin. X Y will sich mit ihrem Thema nicht einfach beschäftigen, sondern die sie interessierenden Fragen gründlich behandeln und erforschen.

English translation: *She is very industrious and hardworking and dedicates herself completely to her topic. X Y wants to not simply deal with her topic, but to thoroughly deal with and research the questions that interest her.*

11.
He is one of the highly qualified scientists and independently decides all problems. He participates in the educational and scientific life of department, learns experimental and theoretical aspects of modern science. (English original)

12.
Sie ist motiviert, verantwortungsvoll, zielstrebig, leistungsfähig. Sie kann theoretische und empirische Forschungen zu gutem Erfolg führen.

English translation: *She is motivated, responsible, ambitious, capable. She can lead theoretical and empirical research projects to good success.*

13.
I believe that her visit in Prof. X's laboratory would be very beneficial for her development as a scientist. She will learn new research technique of the latest international standard and she will bring this knowledge into our department. (English original)

Without a positive statement from a supervising professor, an application has poor chances. But statements like: *"X Y wants to not simply deal with her topic, but to thoroughly*

deal with and research the questions that interest her" or *"decides all problems"* are too non-specific to prove that an applicant will in the future become an expert.

Not even a third of all applicants take a position in the central text on their personal suitability and academic preparation. On the one side, the segment begins with examinations and publications (thereby implicitly providing proof) and on the other side it always ends with the evaluations of professors from the home university, and often also those of guest advisors. Insofar candidates are positioned as "suitable," particularly in the mutual references of various sorts of texts. In this genre, various voices come together in Bachtin's sense, which permits the creation of several perspectives regarding the applicant. In our society's communicative household, especially in the scientific field, this socio-discursive practice has become so firmly established that, with Luckmann (1996) and Günthner/Luckmann (2002), we speak of a *genre* of scholarship applications. This combines various types of texts. The genre has an important place in the communicative household of a meritocratic academic world.

Metaphorically expressed, the applicant makes a debut in the application genre with her scientific "parents." Here we see, with Goffman (1971), how the primary frame of the parent-child relationship shows through in framings of teaching-learning relationships. Lucius-Höne and Deppermann (2002, 200) point out that positioning acts in interactions make mutual references. In the scholarship application, we find positioning activities on the parts of various authors that are normally mutually supportive, but still differ significantly in details. With the linguistic anthropologist Tedlock (1993), we could say: too much representation, too little evocation. Also the statements of the professors from home universities often show an excessive generality which positions the applicant not as a future partner in a scientific field, but rather as a pupil who is still teetering on the threshold.

The framing of the parental role sometimes continues in Question 5 concerning the significance of the scholarship for the applicant's career (more than half are written in English, as stated above). Here we can also find the scholarship positioned as national developmental assistance.

Examples:
14.
That knowledge, which she can obtain by this project, will help her to stay a master in the field of x methods (specially in y). She will solve the group of problems, which have many difficulties. She has the potential to stay a good scientist and do so much for the prosperity of X country. (English original)

15.
I know that the PhD will assist in moving him forward at CC university as well as allow him to contribute to the development of the civil society in X. He will be able to impart additional knowledge to students and others throughout the country and play an active role in allowing for proper and stable growth of his country. (English original)

16.
Erfahrene, in Deutschland ausgebildete Lehrkräfte sind für die Weiterentwicklung der x-ischen Y-Wissenschaft dringend notwendig. Es wäre ein Gewinn für uns, wenn Frau AB die Chance erhalten würde, ihr Forschungsvorhaben in Deutschland zu erarbeiten.
English translation: *Experienced teachers trained in Germany are urgently needed for the further development of x-ian Y-science. It would be a gain for us if Frau AB would receive the opportunity to work on her research plan in Germany.*

In the German professors' evaluations of their students, we usually find a higher degree of specificity. The moral evaluation of the person is subordinated to the quality of the research plan and the appliant's competence. The more detailed the evaluator's description of the applicant's activities, the more familiar s/he shows her/himself to be with his/her work, the more insight s/he also shows into the work of his/her department.

Example:

17.

XY gehört zu den leistungsstärksten Teilnehmern meiner Veranstaltungen, an denen sie aktiv und regelmäßig teilnahm. Sie erbrachte sowohl im Rahmen der Mitarbeit in den Veranstaltungen wie auch in der Klausur überdurchschnittliche Leistungen. Sie verfügt über gute Y-Kenntnisse. Sie beherrscht die deutsche Sprache auf einem sehr hohen Niveau, so dass es ihr ohne Probleme möglich ist, die Forschungsarbeit u.a. in deutscher Sprache gewinnbringend in Angriff zu nehmen. Die Bewerberin ist ein freundlicher und aufgeschlossener Mensch. Sie ist fleißig, diszipliniert und zielstrebig.

English translation: *XY is one of the most productive participants in my courses, in which she actively and regularly took part. She gave an above-average performance not only in the frame of the courses, but also in the examination paper. She disposes of good Y knowledge. She has a command of the German language on a very high level, so that it is possible for her to profitably undertake the research work without problems, among other things in the German language. The applicant is a friendly and open person. She is industrious, disciplined and ambitious.*

Common to such evaluators' other-positionings is that they present the young researcher as standing out positively from the masses of applicants.

2. 7. German professors' agreement to become advisors

The German professors' agreement to become advisors normally does not place moral judgments in the center and is typically expressed as follows.

18.

Herr/Frau XY aus A, Doktorand des Faches B, hat mich gebeten zu seinem Antrag auf Förderung Stellung zu nehmen. Das tue ich hiermit gerne.

English translation: *Herr/Frau XY from A, a doctoral candidate in the subject B, has asked me to take a position on his/her application for support. I am hereby pleased to do so.*

Frau/Herr XY beabsichtigt, zum 1. 1. 2008 ein Promotionsstudium am FB B der C-Universität unter meiner Betreuung aufzunehmen. Vorangegangen ist ein reger Informationsaustausch, in welchem mir die Unterlagen über die bisherige Ausbildung von Frau/Herrn Y sowie eine Projektskizze zu einer Arbeit über „The Concept of ABC and its Applicability to D" vorgelegen haben.

English translation: *Frau/Herr XY intends to begin on 1/1/2008 a doctoral course of studies in Department B of C University under my supervision. Previously an animated exchange of information took place in which I was presented records of Frau/Herr Y's previous training, as well as a project outline for a work on "The Concept of ABC and its Applicability to D.*

19.

Frau/Herr XY möchte x-wissenschaftlich die xxx Konsequenzen des Paradigmenwechsels hin zu YY untersuchen. Die von ihm angestellten Überlegungen erscheinen mir als tragfähig und viel versprechend. Der bisherige Ausbildungsgang des Kandidaten lässt eine viel versprechende Untersuchung erwarten. Ich bin daher bereit, Frau/Herrn XY zu betreuen. Ich würde mich freuen, wenn dies vom AAA ermöglicht werden könnte.

English translation: *Frau/Herr XY wishes to examine x-scientifically the xxx consequences of the paradigm change to YY. The ideas which s/he has developed appear to me to be sound and very promising. The candidate's previous educational career permits me to expect a very promising study. I am therefore ready to supervise Frau/Herr XY. I would be pleased if this could be made possible by the AAA.*

Almost all provide information on the precise circumstances of the contact and are clearly oriented to the scientific discipline. The advisor tells how s/he became acquainted with the applicant, why the research would be worthwhile and the applicant's qualifications; s/he explicitly accepts responsibility for supervising the applicant's scientific work. Here we find no encomiums to the AAA or the candidate's home university, but very often, however, an expression of gratitude. In the center is the very probable success of the work, often characterized as of mutual benefit.

Sometimes a high degree of standardization is conspicuous in the formulations. The greater the degree of standardization, the more impersonally the evaluation is stylized. Commissions of reviewers usually read this as a sign of low engagement for the candidate. The text type of "agreeing to be an advisor" is received not only in terms of explicit statements, but also in terms of the iconicity of the amount of effort made by the advisor.

3. Subject cultures

Three-fourths of the technical-natural scientific applicants (including mathematicians) discuss their methods. Some name the apparatuses with which they want to work in Germany. From this we can infer their methodical approach. We note that in the Soviet era a high scientific niveau prevailed at Soviet academies of science (institutes of technology) especially in areas of interest for armaments, nuclear technology and aerospace science. (Pogorel'skaja 2008).

In the social scientific area, we find explanations of methodical procedures and the clarification of the data basis for the study to be carried out abroad only in applications by jurists. This seems to be a consequence among other things, of lively exchanges with German jurists, who in the post-socialist period advised many Post-socialist governments on the development of various law books, and in this connection also taught courses at universities. Chiefly, however, due to their marketability, the management and juridical disciplines are not affected by post-Soviet cutbacks of research institutes (Pogorel'skaja 2008, 39).

Many applications from the social and cultural sciences conspicuously lack discussions of methodical procedures. This further reinforces the impression of an excessive level of generality of the application. If a scholarship applicant, for example, wants to do research on the implementation of intercultural communication studies within foreign language seminars at universities, we find general explanations of what (inter)-cultural competence is, but nothing about the procedure for collecting data or operationalizing the domains of competence. Important questions remain open: Will instructional material be analyzed, will a survey of instructors or of classroom discourse be made? We are left in the dark about most methodological answers to these questions.

4. Scientific communities of practice

The great differences between the applications from the technical-natural sciences and those from the social and cultural sciences may have to do with the fact that the area of natural science and engineering (1.) was better supported in the former Soviet Union, as well after the system change and (2.) was less susceptible to ideological influence.

We encounter subject-specific and interdisciplinary "communities of practice" (Wenger 1998) with vague and fluid external boundaries and more or less unified orientations. S. Corder and M. Meyerhoff (2007, 441-465) characterize communities of practice, drawing on works by E. Wenger and P. Eckert and S. McConnell-Ginet, as established by: the "mutual engagement of members, members' jointly negotiated enterprise, and members' shared repertoire" (p. 444). A shared discourse history is always significant in communication. Beyond this, in scientific communities of practice with their certification and access regulations, it is above all institutional procedures and practices that play a role.

In the analysis of textual differences, it is of course not being Georgian or Kirghiz (etc.) that is reflected as an essentialistically different resource, but rather different societal organizations of the academic field with its qualification and access norms, its text types, genres and ideologies. Many members of the younger generation of scientists from the Southern parts of the former USSR still lack adequate knowledge of the practices needed for success in the Western scientific field (be it in Germany or elsewhere). In the frame of this article, I cannot characterize post-Soviet scientific organization, but it should be acknowledged that it is overall less meritocratic than in Western societies; jobs are, e.g., not publicly announced, but rather awarded within institutions. One seldom applies for positions at other universities. As before professors themselves choose their own successors. Institutional analysis, such as it is carried out in the sociology of knowledge and cultural boundary work of science (Gieryn 1999, Weingart 2003), is of much more help in the interpretation of a genre such as scholarship application than culturally reductionist tracks in the explanation of countless inter-individual and inter-group behavioral differences (Straub 2007, 9).

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