

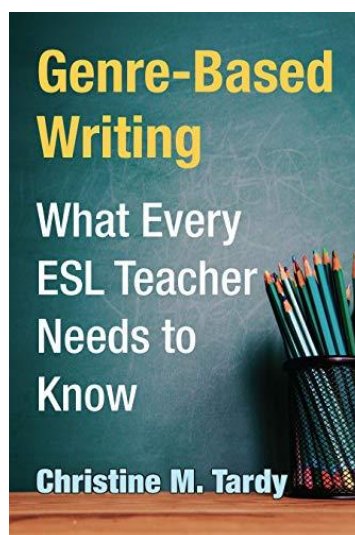
## Genre-Based Writing: What Every ESL Teacher Needs to Know

Received: 30 June 2020

Revised: 22 May 2021

Accepted: 11 January 2023

Kasidit Supan\*



Genre-Based Writing: What Every ESL Teacher Needs to Know

Christine M. Tardy. (2019). University of Michigan Press ELT. 91 pages

When comes the time to discuss pedagogical strategies to teach writing for non-native English speakers, there is hitherto a room for genre-based writing approach (GBA henceforth) to play as a pivotal role in guiding and scaffolding learners to achieve the capability of practical composition. Although there are schools of genre-based approaches influencing teaching the English language: ESP (English for Specific Purposes) which focuses on the particular use of English in a specific field, SFL (Second Foreign Language) which aims on purposively using English as the second foreign language, and the new rhetoric schools which is seen as a disciplinary field approaching for widening rhetorical specialties, this paper is focusing on reviewing a book which employs genre-based approach to offer ESL teachers the guidelines for teaching writing in particular. The approach is, although, seen as a traditional and conventional teaching frame for writing classrooms, it is constantly changed in some manners so that it can be properly adopted in modern courses, kept changing through time. Cristine M. Tardy (2019) noticed this convention, but some modification in the approach, and kindly elaborated the nature and alteration of the guidance in her book, *Genre-Based Writing - What Every ESL Teacher Needs to Know*.

---

\* Ph.D. student in English as an International Language (EIL), Chulalongkorn University, e-mail: Junior\_english@hotmail.com

The book was published in the United States of America by the University of Michigan Press. Its content is subdivided into an exordium and eight following chapters, where genre-based writing approach is expounded in different shades and degrees in detail. Starting from the preface, the book vividly explains the personal history and background of the author, and also her motivations to scrutinize and investigate the field of teaching writing through disparate approaches, but ends up with her decision to step into the landscape of genre-based approach as it rewarded her in the career of writing teachers for ESP students - English For Specific students.

A bibliophile Christine simplified her background knowledge from her past readings on the nature of genres in different perspectives in her first chapter *What is Genre?* - The author demystified the essence of genre by exemplification with common knowledge, movie genres, before throwing light on genre in academic writing, where she described genre as a convention or a norm that only a glance would reveal the nature of the text, and breaking off the first chapter with five elemental genres in writing: procedure, narrative, description, report, and explanation.

After thoroughly construing the basic knowledge of genre, the author moved to teaching writing in the second chapter *What is a Genre-Based Approach to Teaching Writing* - Genre specific knowledge is served first and supported later by theories from predominant cognoscenti, whom Tardy employed some of their areas to be used in this book and mentions this expertise as well, like a guru in GBA Hyland whose work was published in 2004. Thereafter, the author sheds more light onto the topic by providing her past experience, in which GBA was required and employed in her teaching field. Besides, she also stressed the importance of GBA to teaching writing and raised awareness of genre by clarifying her five principles of genre-based writing instruction.

With extensive foreground knowledge of GBA in teaching writing, readers are prompted to design genre-based writing tasks as guided in the third chapter *Designing Genre-Based Writing Tasks* - Tardy clearly explained genre analysis written by Swales (1996), a founding father of Genre in Writing, and, despite stating the time-consumption, elaborated six areas of task design which undoubtedly helps writing teachers prepare applicative teaching materials: (1) selecting genres of focus, (2) sequencing and scaffolding tasks, (3) selecting sample texts, (4) keeping it student centered, (5) contextualizing tasks, and (6) producing genres. As well, Tardy further states that these six areas are well detailed with meaningful citations from renowned exponents like Swain (1993), and examples of GBA tasks under the area of *Contextualizing Analysis Tasks* (p. 22). What's more, the author as well set forth *Meta-Cognitive Scaffolds* - generated by Negretti and McGrath (2018) - which is now under the spotlight of GBA in teaching writing, *Before Writing and After Writing Approaches*.

Aiming to simply put forward the layout of genre analysis and that of GBA, the author made her explanation clear on concrete strategies for students and teachers to explore genres systematically across a range of features in the fourth chapter *Exploring Form and Content in the Classroom* - The strategies are made plain by starting from Rhetorical Moves, wherein the author unfolded a fairly detailed

process for moves analysis that is considered a more streamlined process, usually sufficient for classroom analysis. Following that, the author asserted Linguistic Features, where she delineated common grammatical features to explore. However, in case any readers would like to discover more about these features, books related to the field of linguistic features in genre analysis are suggested like *Navigate Academic: Writing Supporting Genres* written by Swales and Feak (2011), and *Genre and Second Language Writing* composed by Hyland (2004), both of which have been found relevant to the topic of this book so these two books are recommended to readers in the field of Genre-analysis. These two books provide different points of grammatical interests relevant to genre analysis, so that other grammatical features are explored, and, significantly plus, the readers would learn more processes to detect other linguistic features from their specific texts. By any means, this book reveals some oftentimes overlooked features in genre analysis - Lexical Features like jargons, slangs, acronyms, and idioms, which are further developed from the author's previous books: *Building Genre Knowledge* (2009), and Lexico-Grammatical features like hedges (e.g. apparently and in general), boosters (e.g. "We find that ..." and "It is unquestionable that..."), and metadiscourse (e.g. "In this article," and "As noted previously,") Also, this chapter states about Multimodal Features to explore like fonts, figures, and emojis. Even though all features explained in this chapter may seem complex and somewhat sophisticated, the author should be granted compliments on reader-friendly stylistic writing, due to her clear lecture and simple language use, and on teacher-friendly explanation since she supplies application activities for writing instructors to readily make use in their classes.

As if the author were able to read her readers' mind, she knows what should be added to her book which is completely new to her field of interest: *Genre Network* which is left further unremarked by Freedman (1987), whose work was read by Tardy herself and she mentioned this expert in this book as well. The author explicated about this network in the fifth chapter *Exploring Genre Practices in the Classroom* - This chapter well exposes genre uptake and network, which are about the idiosyncrasy of writing pieces relevant to each other like a conference call for paper, an individual conference proposal, and acceptance letter, all of which share a common ground of genre base, along with uptakes that relate to goal-oriented actions communities carry out. Again, varieties of interesting application activities are presented as well as the topic of Composing Processes, which is regarded practical for students, and that of Classroom Exploration, concerned over practices into the classroom.

For writing teachers, the sixth and the seventh chapters are well written to be preferably employed in classroom - *Exploring the Social and Rhetorical Aspects of Genre in the Classroom* and *Playing with Genres* - Directly served to teachers first, Rhetorical Situation is put across. It is about the recurrence or repetition of similar rhetorical situation that give rise to genres. It is really impressive that the example provided is regular knowledge like wedding ceremonies, at which the author strives to connect rhetoric situations influencing the writing of wedding invitation; for example, does the issue of who pays the wedding have an effect on the invitation in any way? Is it necessary to write about the

couple's history or their socioeconomic situation? These issues and situations play important roles in writing a wedding invitation, whereby hinting that all writing pieces have factors or influencers manipulating the process of writing, together with their genres and discourse communities. Once more, the author played up with application activities and classroom exploration. Supplementarily, the author layouts the new milestone of genre analysis and GBA in her book's last chapter, which poses a perspective that creativity is a quality of human language, thereby rendering language use appearing in each day, so as well the genre. Therefore, it is a good exercise for writing disciples to investigate new landscapes of genres. When exploring a genre, writing students can also examine its variations and possible innovations that would be pragmatic for revealing more about discourse communities and unraveling new corpus-based studies like studying parodies, suggested the author.

Forbye and finally, the final chapter - *Final Tips for Teachers* - lays bare seven suggestions for writing teachers to leverage and embrace GBA in their classrooms. These seven recommendations are summaries of all guidance reported by the author, which undeniably yield fruition when adopted in any writing courses. This book *Genre-Based Writing: What Every ESL Teacher Needs to Know* is a propitious instrument for writing lecturers, as well as writing pupils since the book enlightens not only the background knowledge and novelties in the field of genre analysis, but provisions strategies to teach writing in genre systematically. The most astounding interest of the book is the stylistic writing which is effortless to be read and it sets an exemplar that good writing needs not be written in complex structures but in the most comprehensible ones; big compliments are to Christine M. Tardy, a marvelous writing teacher and an awesome writer.

## References

- Freadman, A. (1987). *Anyone for Tennis?* In I. Reid (Ed.), *The Place of Genre in Learning: Current Debates*. Geelong Australia: Centre for Studies in Literary Education, Deakin University.
- Hyland, K. (2004). *Genre and Second Language Writing*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.
- Negretti, R., & McGrath, L. (2018). Scaffolding Genre Knowledge and Metacognition: Insights from an L2 Doctoral Research Writing Course. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 40, 12-31.
- Swain, M. (1993). The Output Hypothesis: Just speaking and Writing Aren't Enough. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 50, 158-164.
- Swales, J. M. (1996). *Occluded Genre in Academy: The Case of the Submission Letter*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2011). *Navigating Academic: Writing Supporting Genres*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Tardy, C. M. (2009). *Building Genre Knowledge*. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press.

- Tardy, C. M. (2019). *Genre Based Writing: What Every ESL Teachers Needs to Knows*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Yasuda, S. (2011). Genre-Based Tasks in Foreign Language Writing: Developing Writers' Genre Awareness, Linguistic Knowledge, and Writing Competence. *Journal of Second Language writing*, 20, 111-113.