



Implementing Genre-Based Writing in English Language Teaching: Strategies, Challenges, and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Writing is considered the most complex skill in English language learning as it requires learners to generate, organize, and articulate ideas into coherent texts. This study aims to examine the implementation of the Genre-Based Writing Approach (GBWA) in English language teaching by identifying strategies, challenges, and possible solutions. A qualitative descriptive design was employed using classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of students' writing. Data were analyzed thematically to capture recurring patterns in instructional practices, difficulties encountered by teachers and learners, and potential solutions for improvement. The findings indicate that strategies such as scaffolding, the use of model texts, collaborative learning, and digital resources significantly enhance students' writing competence, although teacher expertise, student resistance, and institutional constraints remain major obstacles. The results highlight the importance of teacher training, curriculum reform, assessment alignment, and institutional support for effective implementation of GBWA. The implications of this research provide practical insights for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers in enhancing genre-based writing instruction in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Genre-Based Writing, English Language Teaching, Strategies, Challenges

ABSTRAK

Menulis merupakan keterampilan paling kompleks dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris karena menuntut kemampuan menghasilkan, mengorganisasi, dan mengungkapkan ide dalam bentuk teks yang koheren. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penerapan Genre-Based Writing Approach (GBWA) dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dengan menyoroti strategi, tantangan, serta solusi yang dapat diimplementasikan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis dokumen tulisan mahasiswa. Data dianalisis dengan teknik analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola strategi pengajaran, hambatan yang dihadapi guru maupun siswa, serta alternatif solusi yang mungkin diterapkan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi seperti scaffolding, penggunaan teks model, pembelajaran kolaboratif, dan pemanfaatan teknologi digital mampu meningkatkan kompetensi menulis siswa, meskipun keterbatasan pengetahuan guru, resistensi siswa, serta kendala institusional masih menjadi hambatan. Temuan ini menegaskan perlunya pelatihan guru, reformasi kurikulum, penyesuaian sistem asesmen, serta dukungan kelembagaan agar GBWA dapat diintegrasikan secara efektif. Implikasi penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi praktis bagi guru, perancang kurikulum, dan pembuat kebijakan dalam meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran menulis berbasis genre di konteks EFL.

Kata kunci: Genre-Based Writing, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Strategi, Tantangan

INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely regarded as one of the most complex and demanding skills in English language learning. Unlike receptive skills such as listening and reading, writing requires learners to generate, organize, and articulate ideas into a coherent text while simultaneously attending to grammar, vocabulary, and discourse conventions. Scholars emphasize that developing writing proficiency is a gradual and recursive process that demands systematic instruction and adequate scaffolding (Hyland, 2003; Nation, 2009). In this context, instructional approaches play a critical role in shaping learners' writing competence and their ability to engage in meaningful written communication.

Over the past two decades, the Genre-Based Writing Approach (GBWA) has gained significant attention as a pedagogical model in English language teaching. Rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics, GBWA emphasizes the relationship between language and social context, highlighting that texts are shaped by particular communicative purposes and cultural conventions (Martin & Rose, 2008). By introducing learners to different genres such as narratives, reports, and argumentative essays teachers can provide explicit guidance on the structural and linguistic features required to produce texts that meet academic and professional standards. This orientation shifts writing instruction from a purely skills-based focus to one that is socially and contextually situated.

Despite its pedagogical potential, the implementation of GBWA presents various challenges in classroom practice. Teachers are required not only to understand the linguistic and rhetorical structures of different genres but also to design effective scaffolding strategies that gradually lead learners from guided practice to independent writing. Research has shown that without sufficient teacher preparation, genre pedagogy may result in formulaic writing and limited learner autonomy (Cheng, 2006; Yasuda, 2011). These findings suggest that successful implementation depends on the teacher's capacity to balance explicit instruction with opportunities for creativity and learner agency.

In addition to teacher-related challenges, learners themselves often face difficulties in adapting to genre-based writing instruction. Students with limited exposure to authentic texts may struggle to recognize the rhetorical moves and linguistic patterns characteristic of each genre (Tardy, 2009). Furthermore, learners from different cultural and educational backgrounds may hold diverse conceptions of writing, which can influence their engagement with genre pedagogy (Kaplan, 2012). Such differences underscore the importance of considering cross-cultural perspectives in designing genre-based writing programs, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

At the institutional level, the adoption of GBWA also raises questions regarding curriculum integration, assessment practices, and resource availability. Effective implementation requires alignment between teaching objectives, classroom activities, and evaluation methods. Previous studies indicate that standardized assessments often prioritize grammatical accuracy over genre conventions, which may discourage teachers from fully adopting genre pedagogy (Huang, 2014).

Therefore, institutional support in terms of professional development, curricular reform, and the provision of authentic materials is essential for maximizing the benefits of GBWA.

Given these considerations, this study seeks to examine the implementation of Genre-Based Writing in English language teaching by exploring its strategies, challenges, and potential solutions. The purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how GBWA can be effectively integrated into language classrooms, thereby offering practical insights for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design aimed at exploring the implementation of the Genre-Based Writing Approach (GBWA) in English language teaching. The research focused on identifying strategies adopted by teachers, the challenges they encountered, and potential solutions for effective application. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of students' written works. Classroom observations were conducted to capture how teachers scaffolded writing tasks and applied genre pedagogy in practice. Meanwhile, interviews provided deeper insights into teachers' pedagogical reasoning and learners' perceptions of the approach. Document analysis allowed the researcher to trace patterns of genre development in students' writing across different stages of instruction.

To ensure validity and reliability, data triangulation was applied by combining multiple sources of evidence and cross-checking the findings. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding and categorizing patterns emerging from the transcripts and field notes. This process made it possible to interpret the data systematically and link the findings to relevant theoretical frameworks. Ethical considerations were maintained by obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring anonymity, and safeguarding confidentiality throughout the research process. This methodological design was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies, challenges, and solutions in implementing genre-based writing in English language teaching contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies in Implementing Genre-Based Writing

One of the central strategies employed by teachers in implementing genre-based writing is scaffolding, a process of gradually transferring responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student. Teachers begin by modeling texts and explicitly explaining their purposes, stages, and linguistic features before guiding students through joint construction of similar texts. This approach, rooted in Vygotskian notions of the Zone of Proximal Development, ensures that learners are supported in manageable steps as they acquire the skills needed to write independently (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). The strategy also prevents cognitive overload, which is a common obstacle for second language learners.

Teachers also frequently use explicit instruction to make learners aware of the rhetorical structures that characterize different genres. For example, when teaching argumentative essays, teachers highlight the use of thesis statements, supporting arguments, and counter-arguments, while in report writing, they emphasize classification and description of phenomena. By providing students with explicit models, teachers demystify the writing process and give learners clear pathways to follow. Research in applied linguistics has shown that explicit genre instruction enhances learners' ability to transfer rhetorical skills across different contexts (Hyland, 2019).

Another strategy is the use of model texts, which serve as reference points for students to analyze and emulate. Model texts provide concrete examples of how abstract linguistic and structural features are realized in authentic communication. Teachers guide students in deconstructing these texts to identify key features, such as cohesive devices, tense usage, and lexical choices. According to Flowerdew (2015), model texts allow learners to gain a deeper understanding of discourse communities and the expectations embedded in each genre.

Collaborative learning is also an integral strategy in the implementation of genre pedagogy. Through group discussions, peer reviews, and joint text construction, learners have opportunities to share ideas, negotiate meaning, and provide feedback to each other. Such interaction not only fosters language development but also builds students' confidence in writing. Empirical evidence suggests that collaboration enhances learners' engagement and facilitates the internalization of genre knowledge (Kim, 2019). Moreover, peer scaffolding helps weaker students benefit from the strengths of their more advanced peers.

The use of portfolios and reflective journals has emerged as another effective strategy for promoting learner autonomy in genre-based writing. Students are encouraged to maintain records of their writing drafts, revisions, and reflections throughout the learning process. This practice enables learners to track their progress and become more conscious of their strengths and weaknesses. Nguyen (2020) found that reflective practices empower students to view writing not merely as a product but as an evolving process that requires critical evaluation and refinement.

Integrating reading into writing instruction has also proven beneficial in genre-based classrooms. Teachers encourage students to engage with authentic texts across genres, thereby enriching their input and exposing them to diverse rhetorical structures. Reading provides learners with a repertoire of linguistic resources that can be applied in their own writing. Studies in second language acquisition indicate that reading extensively in the target language significantly improves students' ability to write in various genres (Grabe & Zhang, 2013).

Technology-based strategies are increasingly employed in genre pedagogy. Teachers make use of digital platforms, interactive writing tools, and online corpora to expose students to authentic examples of genres and to provide instant feedback. For instance, learning management systems and collaborative platforms such as Google Docs allow real-time interaction between students and teachers during the

writing process. Research shows that digital tools enhance motivation and make the learning process more engaging and accessible (Zhang & Hyland, 2018).

Contextualization of writing tasks is another strategy that ensures learners see the relevance of writing genres beyond the classroom. Teachers often design tasks that simulate real-world purposes, such as writing business emails, creating research abstracts, or composing blog posts. Such authentic tasks help learners internalize genre conventions and prepare them for communication in professional and academic contexts. According to Johns (2017), contextualized genre tasks strengthen learners' awareness of audience, purpose, and communicative context.

Teachers also implement differentiated instruction to cater to learners with diverse proficiency levels. Genre pedagogy requires sensitivity to learners' backgrounds, as some may be more familiar with academic genres than others. By adjusting task complexity and providing tailored support, teachers ensure inclusivity in the classroom. Research highlights that differentiated strategies are essential for maintaining student engagement and preventing disengagement among struggling learners (Tomlinson, 2014).

Finally, assessment practices are aligned with genre pedagogy to reinforce learning objectives. Rather than evaluating writing solely based on grammar and vocabulary, teachers develop rubrics that consider genre-specific features, rhetorical organization, and communicative effectiveness. This approach ensures that students' mastery of genre conventions is recognized and rewarded. Bacha (2010) argues that genre-based assessment provides a more holistic evaluation of writing competence, which better reflects learners' ability to function in real communicative contexts.

Challenges in Applying Genre-Based Writing

One of the primary challenges in implementing genre-based writing lies in teachers' limited expertise in genre pedagogy. While many instructors are competent in general language teaching, they often lack deep knowledge of the systemic functional linguistic framework that underpins genre-based approaches. This knowledge gap can result in superficial instruction where teachers emphasize form without addressing the social purposes of texts. Basturkmen (2021) stresses that without sufficient training, teachers risk reducing genre pedagogy to rigid templates, which undermines its effectiveness.

Another challenge is the time-consuming nature of genre-based writing instruction. Teaching writing through stages—such as modeling, joint construction, and independent writing—requires extended classroom hours that are not always available in language curricula. Teachers frequently report that the pressure to cover multiple skills within limited timeframes forces them to abbreviate or skip essential stages of genre instruction. This aligns with Hyland's (2019) observation that institutional constraints often compromise the fidelity of genre pedagogy in practice.

Student-related challenges also emerge, particularly among learners from non-English backgrounds who are unfamiliar with the rhetorical traditions of English academic writing. For example, some students struggle to construct linear arguments because their cultural backgrounds emphasize circular or narrative

structures. Hirvela (2016) found that cross-cultural differences in rhetorical organization often hinder learners' ability to fully engage with genre-based tasks, resulting in writing that does not meet academic expectations.

Learners' limited exposure to authentic texts further compounds the problem. Without extensive reading input, students find it difficult to internalize the discourse patterns and linguistic features of various genres. Tardy (2009) argues that successful genre learning requires immersion in a wide range of texts, but in many EFL contexts, students have restricted access to authentic materials. This limitation makes it challenging for learners to move beyond formulaic writing.

Resistance to change is another barrier that both teachers and students encounter. Teachers who are accustomed to product-based or process-based approaches may find it difficult to adapt to genre pedagogy, which requires a shift in instructional philosophy. Similarly, students may resist explicit genre instruction, perceiving it as overly prescriptive or rigid. Research shows that learner attitudes significantly influence the success of pedagogical innovation (Borg, 2015). Overcoming this resistance requires sustained effort to demonstrate the benefits of the approach.

Assessment practices also pose significant challenges. In many institutions, standardized writing tests focus primarily on grammar and vocabulary accuracy, with little attention to rhetorical organization or genre conventions. This mismatch discourages teachers from fully adopting genre pedagogy, as their efforts may not align with institutional evaluation criteria. Huang (2014) highlights that assessment systems that neglect genre features undermine teachers' motivation and limit the impact of genre-based instruction.

Resource constraints represent another difficulty, particularly in schools with limited access to teaching materials and digital tools. Effective implementation of genre pedagogy often relies on authentic texts, multimodal resources, and collaborative platforms, all of which may be unavailable in under-resourced contexts. This inequity in resource distribution exacerbates the gap between theory and practice, leaving teachers to rely on improvised or outdated materials (Nguyen & Burns, 2017).

A further challenge is related to classroom diversity. Students in the same class often display wide variations in proficiency, motivation, and prior writing experience. Genre pedagogy demands tailored instruction, but large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized support. Tomlinson (2014) observes that differentiated instruction is critical for inclusive learning, yet implementing it in overcrowded classrooms remains a persistent obstacle.

Psychological factors, such as writing anxiety and lack of confidence, also impede learners' engagement with genre-based tasks. Writing in a second language is inherently challenging, and the additional demand to conform to genre conventions may intensify students' anxiety. Cheng (2006) notes that writing apprehension can significantly reduce learners' willingness to take risks and experiment with new genres, resulting in stagnant writing development. Teachers

must therefore strike a delicate balance between explicit guidance and encouragement of creativity.

Finally, institutional policies and curriculum frameworks often fail to provide clear support for genre pedagogy. In many educational systems, writing is treated as a secondary skill compared to reading and grammar instruction. This marginalization leads to insufficient investment in teacher training, curriculum design, and resource provision for writing instruction. Johns (2017) emphasizes that for genre pedagogy to succeed, it must be supported by institutional commitment and curricular alignment, otherwise its implementation will remain fragmented and inconsistent

Solutions and Pedagogical Implications

One of the most significant solutions to address the challenges of implementing genre-based writing is comprehensive teacher training. Teachers need structured professional development programs that not only introduce the theoretical foundations of systemic functional linguistics but also provide practical classroom techniques. Studies show that ongoing training helps teachers gain confidence in scaffolding writing tasks, designing model texts, and conducting genre analysis effectively (Wyatt & Ager, 2017). Without such preparation, genre pedagogy risks becoming formulaic and losing its transformative potential.

Collaboration among teachers also plays an important role in strengthening genre-based pedagogy. Establishing professional learning communities enables instructors to share experiences, exchange teaching materials, and co-develop lesson plans tailored to their contexts. Research demonstrates that collaborative reflection improves instructional consistency and fosters innovative strategies for dealing with diverse learners (Little, 2012). This collegial support ensures that teachers are not working in isolation but are part of a larger effort to promote genre awareness.

Curriculum reform is another crucial step in ensuring the sustainability of genre-based writing instruction. When curriculum guidelines explicitly recognize genre pedagogy as a core approach, teachers are more likely to integrate it systematically rather than superficially. International experiences show that embedding genre pedagogy into national curricula can raise the overall standard of writing instruction (Rose & Martin, 2012). Such reforms also promote alignment between teaching objectives, learning activities, and assessment systems.

The integration of multimodal and digital resources can significantly enhance the effectiveness of genre pedagogy. Tools such as interactive writing applications, online corpora, and multimedia texts expose students to authentic discourse patterns in dynamic formats. Jewitt, Bezemer, and O'Halloran (2016) argue that multimodality enriches learners' understanding of how genres function across different media, which is increasingly important in today's digital communication landscape. By adopting these resources, teachers can make writing instruction more engaging and relevant.

Assessment practices must also evolve to support genre-based instruction. Traditional assessments that focus narrowly on grammatical accuracy should be

replaced or complemented with rubrics that evaluate rhetorical organization, coherence, and audience awareness. Bacha (2010) emphasizes that assessments aligned with genre pedagogy encourage students to prioritize communicative effectiveness over error-free production. When assessment criteria reflect the true goals of genre-based writing, learners are more motivated to engage deeply with the process.

Another solution involves expanding learners' exposure to authentic texts through extensive reading programs. By engaging with a wide variety of genres in real-world contexts, students develop a repertoire of discourse structures that can be applied in their writing. Grabe and Zhang (2013) highlight the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing, noting that consistent exposure to target-language texts fosters greater fluency in producing similar genres. Schools and universities should therefore ensure access to rich and diverse reading materials.

Encouraging student autonomy is equally important in maximizing the benefits of genre pedagogy. Strategies such as portfolio-based learning, self-assessment checklists, and reflective writing journals empower students to take ownership of their learning. Nguyen (2020) found that such reflective practices promote metacognitive awareness, helping learners view writing as a process rather than a final product. This shift in perspective is crucial for sustaining long-term improvement in writing competence.

To address learner anxiety and resistance, teachers can adopt supportive classroom practices that foster a safe environment for experimentation. Providing positive feedback, recognizing incremental progress, and allowing room for creativity within genre conventions can reduce writing apprehension. Cheng (2006) notes that lowering students' anxiety is essential for encouraging risk-taking, which in turn leads to more meaningful engagement with writing tasks. This pedagogical stance acknowledges both the structure and flexibility inherent in genre pedagogy.

At the policy level, institutional commitment is necessary to sustain genre-based writing initiatives. This includes allocating resources for teacher training, integrating writing across disciplines, and investing in technological infrastructure. Johns (2017) argues that systemic support ensures that genre pedagogy is not merely the responsibility of individual teachers but a collective effort embedded in educational systems. Strong institutional backing provides continuity and stability, allowing writing instruction to evolve progressively.

In summary, the solutions to the challenges of genre-based writing require a holistic approach that combines teacher training, curriculum reform, resource provision, and supportive assessment practices. Pedagogical implications extend beyond the classroom, emphasizing the need for systemic alignment between teaching, assessment, and policy. By adopting these solutions, English language teaching can move toward a more equitable and effective model of writing instruction. Ultimately, genre-based pedagogy has the potential to empower learners not only to master academic writing but also to participate confidently in diverse communicative contexts.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of genre-based writing in English language teaching presents both significant opportunities and notable challenges. Findings from this study indicate that strategies such as scaffolding, the use of model texts, collaborative learning, reflective practices, and multimodal resources can substantially enhance students' writing competence. These strategies help learners not only to master linguistic accuracy but also to develop rhetorical awareness and communicative effectiveness. At the same time, the challenges identified ranging from limited teacher expertise, time constraints, and learner resistance, to institutional and assessment-related issues demonstrate that genre pedagogy requires more than classroom-level innovation. It demands a broader alignment of pedagogy, curriculum, and institutional support.

Addressing these challenges calls for systemic solutions, including sustained teacher training, curriculum reform, provision of authentic resources, and the development of assessment practices that reflect genre-based goals. The pedagogical implications underscore the need for a holistic approach that bridges theory and practice while fostering learner autonomy and reducing writing anxiety. Ultimately, by embracing genre pedagogy, English language teaching can better prepare students to meet the demands of academic and professional communication in diverse contexts. This study contributes to ongoing discussions on effective writing instruction and highlights practical pathways for integrating genre-based approaches into language education.

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