

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

Abstract:

The present study investigates the teaching /learning of the different aspects of writing in the writing course ,and the evaluation of writing in both the writing course and the content subjects of the curriculum from both the faculty staff and the students through the use of two questionnaires designed for this purpose. The great deal of division observed among teachers and confirmed by students about the objectives, approaches ,assessment tools ,the writing resources as well as the focus of feedback in the teaching and evaluation of writing across the curriculum ,is a proof of the prevalence of non-theory based eclecticism which is detrimental to the development of students' academic writing competence. These results show that a three-fold genre-based solution is needed in order to render writing instruction and assessment across this curriculum more conducive to the gradual development of students' discipline-specific writing competence. In this regard, the article proposes an outline of a unit of work for teaching the argumentative essay following the principles of the proposed solution.

BOUKEZZOULA Mohammed
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English
University of Mentouri
Constantine

ملخص:

يبحث هذا المقال في مختلف الجوانب المتعلقة بتدريس/تعلم التعبير الكتابي في مادة التعبير الكتابي وكذا تقييم مدى الكفاءة في مجال التعبير الكتابي في كل من مادة التعبير الكتابي ومواد المحتوى في المنهج من وجهة نظر الأساتذة والطلبة عن طريق استبيانين صمما لهذا الغرض. إن الإنقسام الكبير في وجهات نظر الأساتذة ،والذي أكدته وجهات نظر الطلبة فيما يخص الأهداف، المقاربات، وسائل التقييم، وموارد الكتابة وكذا مجالات تركيزا لتغذية الراجعة في تدريس وتقييم الكتابة الأكاديمية عبر مواد المنهج لهو دليل على شيوع المنهج الانتقائي غيرا لمستند على أي نظرية مما يضر بتطور كفاءة الطلبة في مجال الكتابة الأكاديمية. وقد أظهرت هذه النتائج الحاجة إلى حل ثلاثي الأبعاد مستوحى من المقاربة بالنوع من شأنه جعل تدريس وتقييم مادة الكتابة الأكاديمية في هذا الصدد، يقترح المقال الخطوط العريضة لوحدة عمل قصد تدريس المقال الحجاجي مصممة حسب مبادئ الحل المقترح.

Introduction :

Writing academic English with an advanced level of discourse competence that allows one to forge an identity in an academic domain is a real challenge even for native speakers; in the case of non-native speakers of English the challenges are even far greater. Currently, in the Algerian context of higher education reigns a climate of great academic expectations marked by the implementation of the License Master Doctorate (LMD) system ,the increase in the number of universities offering English as a subject of study courses ,along with the significant surge in the number of students majoring in those courses.

This has contributed to the growth in the number of would-be junior researchers aspiring to prepare Master and Doctorate degrees in one of the fields of specialization in English study which has accentuated the demand for a more effective and needs-specific writing instruction that are much beyond the potential of the writing syllabus currently in use.

Statement of the problem

The present article argues in favor of assigning the act of writing and the writing course a central place in the English curriculum. This cannot be achieved solely through increasing the time volume allotted to the writing course, but through the adoption of a writing syllabus type, a writing pedagogy, and a unified evaluation measure across the curriculum that are more responsive to the students' "real world" needs. The most perceived and perhaps unique "real world" need for almost all the students of English to use their writing skills beyond the writing classroom in the Algerian context is in the content subjects within the English curriculum itself. In these content subjects, some form of written text (for example, essay exams, short-answer essays, research papers) is used as the only measure by which these students' academic progress is evaluated.

The thesis of this paper is that bridging the hiatus between writing in the writing course and writing in content modules can be achieved via making use of some pedagogical solutions that are conducive to fostering a discipline-specific academic writing competence. The first one is the adoption of a process genre-based approach that emphasizes the cognitive, social, and the linguistic demands of the specific academic subjects in the English curriculum. Second, the essay being a well established academic genre should serve as the only writing teaching and evaluation measure in all the language-based modules of the curriculum. Equally important is the necessity to demystify the writing evaluation process so as to render the content modules teachers' expectations and feedback more transparent to the students through replacing the currently widely used holistic correction and feedback by genre-based analytical criterion-referenced procedures.

In the light of what has been said above, the study focused on diagnosing the nature of the discrepancy between the teaching and evaluation practice in the writing course and the evaluation of students' writing in the content modules of the English curriculum offered by departments of English at the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Constantine and the university Mohammed Seddik Benyahia of Jijel so as to demonstrate the relevance of the proposed solution.

The present article argues that the genre-based pedagogy for teaching and assessing the academic essay in different disciplines provides novice

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

academic students with rhetorical flexibility and genre awareness that enables them to cope with the writing demands in their classrooms and to live up to academic writing challenges that lie ahead. It is assumed that the different text types and genres that students are expected to write as they advance in the curriculum should be conceived as a chain of genres where the competency in writing one genre leads smoothly to write the following genre within the chain and more importantly the students' mastery of the cognitive and social generic features of the essay genre as a transversal and challenging text type will serve as a decisive stepping stone towards learning to write the other types of texts such as reports and research papers, etc... that are required across the different levels and related subject areas.

Contingent upon the relevance of the generic approach solution proposed above, this paper goes on to argue that argumentation as a macro type of the academic essay genre should occupy an important place in writing instruction and evaluation across the curriculum especially at more advanced levels. The choice of argumentation has been motivated by the fact that in order for them to assert an authorial voice in the disciplines for which they bid entry, students 'are expected to develop critical thinking skills so that they can dig deeper below the surface of the subjects they are studying and engage in critical dialogue with its main theories and arguments' Cotrell (2005:8). The focus of critical thinking is the ability to understand and produce sound arguments, the ability to take a stance and to support it with evidence in order to persuade others to accept your point of view. It follows, then, that given its importance in forging novice academics identities as members of a discourse community, the argumentative essay should be assigned a central place in the teaching and assessment of writing across the subjects of the curriculum. The module of Linguistics has been chosen here on the basis of its central importance to the subjects of this study who are specializing in language sciences and applied linguistics.

In order to assess the relevance of the aforementioned proposed solution, the present study specifically seeks to answer the following major question: Does the writing course in use in the ENS of Constantine and the university M.S Benyahia, Jijel address specifically and adequately in terms of teaching methodology and evaluation criteria the students' writing needs across the curriculum? To answer this question, we analyzed information about the teaching /learning of the different aspects of writing in the writing course, and the evaluation of writing in both the writing course and the content modules of the curriculum from both the teachers and students perspectives in the ENS of Constantine and in the M.S. Benyahia university in Jijel. The design of the two questionnaires was informed by a review of the existing literature on second language writing with a specific focus on that related to the genre-based approach.

Review of the Literature

The history of the different approaches of writing instruction and the many shifts in the pendulum that have characterized it reflect the continuous evolution in specialists' understanding and operationalization of the different components of a key and fundamental construct in literacy teaching and assessment, namely *discourse competence*. Since its emergence as a distinctive area of scholarship in the 1980s on the basis of models developed from L1 writing research, SL/FL writing has undergone a major ideological shift from *product* to *process*, and now to *genre-based writing*. Indeed, these different theories which are usually presented as 'historically evolving movements' are not opposed to or meant to replace each other, but should more accurately be viewed as complementary and overlapping perspectives that enable us to grasp a more comprehensive picture of developing and assessing students' discourse competence. The earliest models are generally referred to as 'the product approaches'.

As far as discourse competence is concerned, both product and process approaches have been criticised for their neglect of 'different types of knowledge that writers employ when exercising this competence' Bruce (2013:2). The proponents of genre-based pedagogy claim that the concept of genre offers a more adequate way for conceptualizing, operationalizing, and promoting the development of the different elements constituting discourse competence, which is a central component among others forming the more encompassing notion of communicative competence.

Approaches to Genre

As the above title suggests, genre-based pedagogy does not form a unified approach. Various traditions and, thus, various views to the concept of genre have shaped the way this concept has been used in genre pedagogy and research. These competing views to genre are, according to Barawashi and Reif (2010), reflected in the etymology of the word genre itself which was originally borrowed to English from French. This word, i.e., genre, according to the same source, can be traced through its related word gender to two Latin words: the noun *genus* and the verb *generare*. The former means 'kind' or 'class of things' whereas the latter means 'to generate'. These etymological roots have been reflected in the way this concept has been used throughout history. While the traditional view has considered it to be mainly as 'a classificatory tool, a way of sorting and organizing kinds of texts and other cultural objects[...] more recently, and, again across various areas of study, genre has come to be defined less as a means of organizing kinds of texts and more as a powerful, ideologically active, and historically changing shaper of texts, meanings, and social actions' Barawashi and Reif (2010:4). In other words, the way the concept of genre has been defined and used has moved from being a focus on its

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

etymological root of 'gender', when it was used as a tool for the classification tool for literary works, before being gradually superseded by a focus on its second etymological root, namely 'to generate'. Yet, this modern focus on the generative nature of genre knowledge has not resulted in a unified view towards understanding the nature of this knowledge and the way it is implemented. As far as writing instruction is concerned, three theoretical and research traditions can be distinguished in the literature related to genre: Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (known also as the Sydney School), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and the Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS).

Genre as Social Purpose: Systemic Functional Linguistics

It is interest in the social dimensions of language that was at the genesis of the development of genre pedagogy in writing instruction. Halliday's work on Systemic-Functional Linguistics (e.g. Halliday, 1973), critical approaches to education promoted by Paolo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and the work on power and discourse by Michel Foucault (1980) served as the theoretical foundations for what has become known as the Sydney school of genre. This orientation, qualified as being the most clearly articulated and pedagogically successful of the three orientations to genre according to Hyland (2004), has been developed in the 1980's and throughout the 1990's by the Sydney-based genre theorists (for example, Martin, Christie, Halliday) in response at least partly to discontent with the efficacy of the then prevailing process-based writing approaches. Concerned with providing learners with access to what are perceived as the most powerful genres of written and spoken text in society, the Sydney proponents of this approach made the interesting distinction between genres that are personal—such as recount, narrative, moral tales, myths and those that are factual, such as procedure, description, report, explanation and argument. (Kamler, 2001, 83). These genre theorists operating in an English as a first language context argued that process-based approaches, by encouraging student expression and discovery process through their emphasis on personal genres, deprive students of knowledge about the relationship between text structures and social functions, thus resulting in the reproduction of 'social inequality by denying traditionally marginalized students access to academic and cultural texts.' (Barwashi and Reiff: 210; 32). On the basis of this diagnosis, a number of theorists and researchers collaborated with teachers in order to develop an empowering pedagogy destined to school children, which draw most particularly from M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. Developed as a genuine alternative to transformational generative grammar and heavily influenced by cognitive psychology, sociology and educational theory, Systemic functional grammar describes language as a semiotic system or a systemic resource for meaning as opposed to Saussure's

system of signs, and linguistics, following this approach, is viewed as the study of language users' potential to mean. Unlike its predecessors, this linguistics school views language as an open system and context-sensitive means of communication. The task of the applied linguist following this approach consists of finding ways to adapt the multifunctional nature of language to the requirements of the learners. In order to achieve this aim, writing pedagogy should articulate the text-context relationship. This relationship between Texts and contexts is realised at two levels: register and genre (Hyland, 2004). To create a text, writers start with making choices in *register* with respect to three broad dimensions: Field (the social activity in which people are involved and what the text is about), Tenor (the relationship of the participants in the interaction), and mode (the role of language (written, spoken, etc.)). These register variables represent the constraints that each specific context of situation exercises (formal/informal, personal or familiar / professional relationship) on the writers' language choices. Consequently, texts pertaining to scientific or academic fields have fairly predictable features of lexis and grammar whereas personal and informal texts usually contain less restricted range of meanings and grammar (e.g., academic paper on criminology). In addition to the level of register, the text-context interaction is achieved through genre. Genre is the construct which reflects how the writer's linguistic choices (register variables) are conditioned by the social purpose he intends to achieve through composing a given text. In this sense, 'genre connects culture to situation, and register connects situation to language' Barawashi and Reif (2010:33).

The Sydney School has often been criticized for its tendency to show genres as being comprised of elementary, so-called, 'sub-genres', such as narration, description, explanation, evaluation, argumentation etc., while neglecting a clear focus on establishing their specific genre conventions. It is another approach to genre, English for Specific Purposes, to which we will turn now, which provides us with such vital information.

Genre in the English for Specific Purposes Tradition

The emergence of English as a lingua-franca in an increasingly globalized world is both increasing the worldwide interest in English language learning/teaching and changing the nature of English Language Teaching (ELT) itself. The English for Specific Purposes movement in general, and one of its branches, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), in particular is leading this change. The branches of ESP are developing a pragmatic pedagogy that orientates students to issues of content. This pedagogy is based on the explicit teaching of the knowledge constructs, discourse conventions, and registers of the specific disciplines in order to enable students to write effectively in their academic assignments. A variety of options have so far been proposed in order

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

to encourage students to engage directly with the knowledge of other disciplines: linked courses (where teachers of English collaborate with faculty from other disciplines as they tie their writing to the discipline-based assignments /curriculum),sheltered courses (where instruction is oriented toward the discourse of the student's speciality), reading /writing courses ,and content-based instruction.Among the important innovations that have been sharpened in EAP and that are now crossing over to ELT in general and ESL/EFL writing in particular is the genre-based approach.Mcdonough (2005).

Driven by the pedagogical imperative different of catering basically for the needs of the advanced students who are non-native speakers of English,which makes it the most relevant of the three traditions to the Algerian context , English for Specific Purposes (ESP) developed a pragmatic genre-based pedagogy that draws from different schools and approaches including the Sydney school and New Rhetoric Studies.In English for Specific Purposes,the construct ofGenre is used as a tool for designing and teaching academic and professional writing to non-native speakers of English so as to enable learners to ' access to career opportunities,positive identities,and life choices'(Hyland ,2004,45);the ESP movement aims at widening understanding about a range of written genres and developing better teaching/learning conditions for their acquisition to take place. The concern with cross-cultural issues and L2/FL dimensions are distinguishing features for ESP compared to the other two schools of genre ,SFL and NR (Hyland,2004,45).

John Swales,the dean of genre studies in the ESP tradition, acknowledges that perhaps the sole original contribution of this tradition to the theory of genre lies in the applied dimension it has given to the ideas emanating from the other two major genre schools so as to render the teaching/learning based on explicit descriptions of the formal characteristics of genres possible (Swales,1990).He articulates this applied orientation in the following relatively long definition that he gives to the notion of genre ,and that- for the sake of explicitness and clarity-we feel obliged to report here almost verbatim :

' A genre comprises a class of communicative events ,the members of which share some set of communicative purposes.These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre.This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constraints choice of content and style.Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a

genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action.' Swales (1990:58)

As shown in this definition, Swales' conception of genre is based on three interlocking key elements: genre, communicative purpose, and discourse community. As far as discourse community is concerned, Swales (1990) sets six defining criteria that he succinctly summarized as follows: 'there are common goals, participatory mechanisms, information exchange, communicative specific genre, a highly specialized terminology and a high general level of expertise.' Swales (1990:29). Given its importance in determining the internal structure of a particular genre, defining communicative purpose that an identified genre intends to achieve in a discourse community constitutes the starting point for a typical genre analysis within the ESP tradition. One of the problems that may arise in this regard is that a given genre may serve sets of different communicative purposes. As far as the pedagogic solution proposed in this article is concerned, Swales interestingly notes that 'in the academic context, a genre with high potential for conflicting purposes is that of the student written examination.' Swales (1990:47). **Therefore, the faculty staff should work together in order to set explicit criteria for the definition of this important academic genre's purpose.** Within the framework of the communicative purpose definition, the analysis proceeds then from a genre schematic structure—made up of rhetorical moves—to its lexico-grammatic features (style, tone, voice, grammar, syntax) that realize each rhetorical move. Barawashi and Reif (2010:46). An example of this analysis is offered in the analytical framework of the argumentative essay proposed by Hyland (1990) and used as the basis for the design of a unit of work for teaching this genre proposed in the last part of this article.

Modern ESP pedagogies focus on providing students with exposure to a wide range of genres and rhetorical experiences and on encouraging them to analyse their genre practices using a methodology based on the provision of rhetorical consciousness raising tasks where students are usually required to compare texts and write mixed genre portfolios (Hyland, 2004).

The third major tradition in the study of genre, namely New Rhetoric (N.R.) has been deliberately omitted from this discussion because, unlike the other two schools, it has not been developed out of a pedagogical imperative.

The Writing Across the Curriculum Movement (WAC)

The Writing Across the Curriculum movement (WAC) is one of the major influential movements in teaching composition in English as an L1 academic settings. This movement has started and spread in the mid 1970's in North American universities where a large number of WAC programs are currently offered.

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

This approach emerged in order to fill a void in the teaching of academic literacy in English as an L1 especially at the university level. The basic writing needs for students majoring in philosophy, sociology, psychology, economic and so on are related to writing “English papers” in these disciplines; yet, most of the writing that these students are required to produce in the general English course with its focus on literature failed to meet these needs. Individual attempts by some teachers to address this issue also failed to improve students’ academic writing competence because of these teachers’ ignorance of the conventions specific to each academic community. Writing a lab report or a business proposal, the proponents of this approach argued, is different from writing a common English paper or the journalistic essay genres (Williams, 2003).

The major goal of this approach to academic writing is to increase students’ motivation to write through rendering writing tasks more authentic by linking them to content area courses.

The conditions of teaching academic writing across the university English curriculum in our context bear a great deal of resemblance to those that caused the development of WAC in the American context of higher education. Taking into consideration the differences in audiences (English as a first language in the former and English as a foreign language in the latter), what is needed in our context is more awareness of the existence of discipline-specific writing conventions, an effective approach to address students’ needs in this regard, and even more importantly making the gradual development of a discipline-specific writing competence as the major goal orienting writing pedagogy across the English curriculum. This pedagogy will be empowering to our students because it will ultimately grant them access to full membership in the academic communities they wish to enter. If these students are to write research papers, dissertations, research articles, and so on in order to become permanent faculty staff initially and to survive and get promoted subsequently in their academic careers afterwards, then, pursuing this goal becomes legitimate. It is also worth noting that the fact that, unlike in the WAC context, the writing course is taught along with the content modules in the same department renders the cooperation and synergy between the writing teachers and content area teachers not only more desirable but also more practical.

One of the most important contributions that genre analysis has made to teaching second /foreign language writing in EAP settings is to show that, while academic discourse is an identifiable register, language varies considerably across disciplines and sub-disciplines. An effective way to raise students’ awareness to the significant differences in written texts across disciplines is through focusing on authentic texts pertaining to the genres that the students are expected to write and studying the presence and use of the

features typical of these differences .The genre approaches to EAP writing pedagogy highlights the view to academic writing ‘as a situated disciplinary practice’ and challenging the students wrongly held ‘ monolithic, universal view of academic discourse’ Hyland(2004:145).

The Role of the Essay in the Set of Academic Genres

This section deals with the relationship between essay writing in the writing course and essay writing within the English language curriculum. This relationship is central to the argument defended along the present article :bridging the gap between writing in the writing course and writing in the subject area modules of the curriculum depends on the adoption of the academic essay genre as the only teaching and evaluation tool both in the writing course and the content modules. The adoption of this solution depends primarily on bringing about a change of attitude by all faculty staff to the place and role of writing teaching and assessment across the curriculum; the L.M.D. innovation built on the principle of gradual specialization should be conceived of as a long time process apprenticeship where novice academics ‘discipline specific discourse competence is gradually scaffolded by expert members in order for them to eventually become established members of the community of practice they wish to enter. Achieving such a synergy among faculty stuff, however ,is a demanding ,yet rewarding enterprise .It is demanding because it requires these faculty members first to appropriate what **Clyne(1987)** calls ‘culture-bound discourse norms’ and subsequently strive to transmit them to the novice members. In this regard, the essay should also serve an essential link in the chain of academic genres in the educational system that ensures a smooth and gradual movement leading to the production of longer pieces of academic writing assignments such as the research paper and the dissertation.It is Swales (2004) that has first advocated that different genres should be conceived of as genre chains,genre sets and genre networks.One of the best illustrations of the conception of the academic writing assignments across the curriculum as a chain is ‘the cumulative demonstration of expertise in course assignments’ in the American educational system described by Swales and Lindeman (2002:105) .

Disciplinary Differences in Academic Writing Conventions

A considerable bulk of research was carried out during the 1980s and early 1990s ,and thas focused on graduate L2 students acknowledged problems that are due to the ‘... enormous disparity [that] might exist between their disciplinary knowledge and sophistication and their ability to write in English...’ (**Leki,Cumming and Silva ,2008:38**) . This research has shed light on these students ‘

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

‘...struggles in finding themselves called upon to write discipline-specific texts, including theses and dissertations, with the curricular aid of only elementary and general-focus L2 writing courses, courses whose practices did not always support and at times even conflicted with disciplinary practices (Hansen, 2000; Shneider & Fujishima, 1995). (Leki, Cumming and Silva, 2008:38) .

Algerian university students of English as a foreign language having no prior experience with this language as a medium of instruction have found themselves in a similar anomalous situation ; They plunge directly into writing essays and sometimes longer pieces of writing such as research papers and dissertations in content modules that represent established academic disciplines while following or immediately after finishing a general writing course that requires them to do relatively little or no writing specific to these disciplines. In addition ,the criteria of evaluation in these content modules remain implicit ,and hence occluded for the students despite the long period of time they might spend in university.

In order to render the gradual move from the mastery of essay writing to longer pieces of research smoother and easier, we need to foster in these students rhetorical flexibility and genre awareness through the adoption of a genre-based pedagogy in writing teaching and assessment .The key to developing learners’ rhetorical flexibility depends on ,one hand, on raising their awareness to the specific disciplines’ norms and expectations in terms of the schematic structure of the academic essay ,and ,on the other hand ,on the articulation in the curriculum of the genre-based similarities and differences between the different academic writing assignments .The ever growing number of genre-based description of academic and professional writing that have come into existence especially in the last two decades should serve as resources for achieving these goals.

The Teaching Learning Cycle

The Teaching Learning Cycle is an approach to sequencing tasks, influential in genre pedagogy, and which draws on Vigotsky’s (1978) views of collaborative learning and Bruner’s (1986) ideas of scaffolding. Hyland (2003) suggests that this approach which is often represented as a cycle of teaching and learning ‘...offers an explicit model of how teachers can move through successive phases of classroom tasks and interaction to develop writing abilities.’ Hyland (2003:137) .The teaching-writing cycle, then, offers a principled way of selecting and sequencing writing tasks that is in harmony with the assumptions of the socio-cultural theory.

‘ In terms of pedagogic theory, the teaching-learning cycle draws on modern theories of learning in giving considerable recognition to the importance of COLLABORATION, or peer interaction, and SCAFFOLDING, or teacher supported learning. Most obviously, it supports learners through what Vygotsky called the ‘the zone of proximal development’, or the gap between their current and potential performance ... as teachers move around the cycle, direct teacher instruction is reduced and students gradually get more confidence and learn to write the genre on their own. In other words, students’ autonomy increases with their writing competence as they gain greater control over the genre.’ Hyland (2008:559).

The genre-based, therefore, aims to equip learners via their teachers ‘assistance with the ability ‘to deconstruct, examine, and practice salient discourse features, and to reconstruct discourses within their own particular disciplines’ in both linguistically correct and socially appropriate ways so as to foster in novice writers a discursive competence that allows them to successfully forge ‘their own authorial voice within the disciplinary community to which they are bidding for entry’ (Bruce, 2008:169)

Genre Knowledge and Discourse Competence: An Operational Definition

The provision of an operational definition of the notion of genre which will serve as a basis unit of a genre-based, analytic syllabus for the university-level English writing course, however, is in itself a problematic and challenging issue due to the fundamental disagreement among the existing genre-specialists schools with regard to the very nature of this object of enquiry. Drawing on the richness of the different views to genre, Bruce (2008) proposes a dual social genre/cognitive genre modal as a comprehensive way of operationalizing the elements of genre knowledge that accounts for elements of both text-the overt linguistic trace of a discourse process-the combination of the written record and the social and cognitive operations surrounding its creation and interpretation. Bruce’s model operationalizes the different elements of genre knowledge as follows:

The exercise of discourse competence in academic writing involves knowledge elements from several areas, including: the larger social context, including the wider academic world and the specific discipline within which the text is being created; content knowledge that is being represented within a text; socially recognized functions and patterns of organisation of whole texts; meta-cognitive knowledge employed in the internal structuring of

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

stretches of text that relate to a general rhetorical purpose; and, systems of the language including orthography (spelling), vocabulary, syntax and grammar which support all of the above. Bruce (2013:3)

As far as the writing course syllabus design is concerned, Bruce (op cit) suggests a gradual shift from a focus on cognitive genres in the initial levels of competence to more emphasis on social genres in the more advanced level. As a means of compensating for one of the most decried weaknesses in the genre approach namely—the potential danger of stifling learners’ creativity, the learning cycle has been put forward as a pedagogy that leaves a room for linguistic skills much promoted by the proponents of the process approach, such as planning and drafting. Such a combination between the elements of the genre-based approach and the process-based approach provides an effective way to supplement and round out the weaknesses of both approaches. (Hyland (2003,2004), Flowerdew 1993, Badger and White (2000), Feez (1998).

The review of the literature fostered in us the conviction that developing a discipline-specific academic writing competence should be conceived of as a long process of apprenticeship during which the novice academic writers socialize with the expert members in a sane intellectual milieu so as to acculturate to the generic and specific culture-bound norms of the community of practice for which they bid entry. This empowering conception can only thrive in a departmental environment where there is a convergence of efforts and views of teaching methods and assessment measures of writing teachers as well as of content module teachers across the curriculum geared towards equipping learners with the necessary knowledge, tools, and strategies that allows them, eventually, to acquire authorial membership in the academic field in which they intend to specialize. In this chapter, we have argued that the success of this synergy depends upon the adoption of the essay as the sole teaching and evaluation measure across the curriculum. The adoption of the genre-based approach principles in teaching as well as in assessment is, in our view, the appropriate solution to accomplish this change. Raising students’ genre awareness to the similarities and differences in move structure between the different assignments that they are supposed to master during their lengthy apprenticeship fosters their rhetorical flexibility and increases the transferability of the generic features to the other genres. The essay, hence, should serve as a stepping stone towards writing the longer more valued genres.

Data collection

we analyzed information about the teaching /learning of the different aspects of writing in the writing course, and the evaluation of writing in both the writing

course and the content modules of the curriculum from both the teachers' and students' perspectives in the ENS of Constantine and in the M.S.Benyahia university in Jijel so as to gauge the degree to which the writing course addresses students' writing needs across the curriculum. In order to achieve this aim, two different questionnaires—one destined for students and the other for domain experts (teachers of writing and content modules in our case) were designed and administered.

The Teachers' questionnaire

The Sample

The teachers' questionnaire was administered exclusively to teachers in the ENS of Constantine because most of the staff teaching in the university of Jijel consisted mainly of part-time teachers, which may arise further concerns about the validity and reliability of the results. 17 of the distributed questionnaires have been completed and returned to the head of the departments office and have, therefore, been used as the basis of the present research. A question may legitimately be raised about the adequacy of the choice of the department of English at the E.N.S. of Constantine as a site for conducting this research given that this institution has not adopted the L.M.D. system, yet. Our answer to this question is threefold. First, the writing course offered in the department of English at the M.S.Benyahia university especially in the initial years have been designed on the basis of the E.N.S. of Constantine distance course destined for teachers in training. Second, there was no writing course designed specifically to meet L.M.D. students' needs, and most departments which have adopted the new system have just readjusted the existing courses to fit the L.M.D. architecture. Third, although the vocation of the E.N.S. is the train future teachers, training would-be teachers to forge a discipline specific authorial voice should also be one of the aims of this training taking into consideration the international movement towards encouraging teachers to conduct and publish action research.

We have decided to design only one questionnaire destined for all teachers regardless of whether they teach the writing course or not, but at the same time we have taken into consideration that part of the questionnaire targets specifically the teachers with experience in teaching the writing course at the time of responding to the questionnaire or some time prior to that time. The writing teachers' views, teaching practices and their evaluation techniques and expectations will be compared and contrasted with the writing evaluation methods and expectations to achieve the same aim of making the comparison between the teachers and students' responses, namely the degree of the disparity between the writing course and writing in the content modules from the teachers' point of view.

The Students' Questionnaire

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

The Sample

The students' questionnaire was administered to a total of 53 mostly female students third year L.M.D students majoring in English (option :science du language) at the university of M.S. Benyahia , Jijel. The ENS sample was stratified: it was administered to three groups of teachers in training students belonging to three different levels ,27 mostly females third year students , 26 mostly females fourth year students ,and a total of 21 mostly females 5th year students.

Analysis of the Results

The analysis of the results obtained through the two questionnaires revealed that there is little appreciation of the importance and centrality of the writing skill in general, and essay writing, in particular to students academic success. The great deal of division observed among teachers and confirmed by students about objectives, the approaches ,the assessment tools, the writing resources as well as the focus of feedback in the teaching and evaluation of writing across the curriculum is a proof of the prevalence of non-theory based eclecticism. This anomalous state of things is detrimental to both the development of students' academic writing competence and the professionalization process of teachers. Teachers ,generally, often defend the inconsistencies in their methodological choices in the classroom by the claim that they are practicing eclecticism. Hyland (op. cit) stressed that 'L2 writing classrooms are typically a mixture of more than one approach and that teachers frequently combine these orientations in imaginative and effective ways ' ,but added that 'most commonly these favor either a process or genre orientation' (op. cit. 23) .However ,a distinction should be made between what Manning (2008) calls 'informed eclecticism ' and 'the use of unconstrained pluralism' in the choice of language-teaching approaches. (Manning ,2008:49). Clare Nukui ,a tutor at the university of Reading ,cited by Manning (op.cit.) warns against the danger of 'the eclectic use of activities ,without reference to ELT theory or contextual considerations ' because ,according to him 'principled eclecticism requires a great deal of knowledge of language teaching methodology in order to ensure that students 'needs are being adequately addressed' (op.cit.). Manning (op.cit.) added that 'random unprincipled teachinghas been criticized because it may be atheoretical ,subjective and unsystematic. 'This view, according to him ,is supported even by the most ardent advocates of eclecticism in ELT. Manning advises newly qualified English language teachers to 'practice teaching which is rooted in one or two tried and tested theories before they try their hand at eclecticism.' Martin (2000) who has waged one of the most articulate attacks against eclecticism warns us against the danger of this widespread practice because 'ultimately, this approach de-

professionalizes the applied linguistics community as a whole.’ Martin (2000:123).

In addition to that ,there is no uniform agreement on the place and role of the essay, in general and the argumentative genre, in particular as a teaching and assessment tool across the curriculum .In the same vein ,there is no clear conception of the chain of writing genres required in the English curriculum coupled with a little appreciation among the teachers as the students at different levels about the generic aspects and the discipline-specific aspects of essay writing across the curriculum.Even worse ,both teachers and students hold a deceiving feeling of satisfaction about the degree of compatibility between the teaching and assessment of writing in the writing course, and writing in the content modules of the curriculum which can only lead to the perpetuation of the observed problems and hinders attempts to reform this alarming situation.The students expressed needs for the use of writing models ,content and form focused feedback as well as greater writing challenges and more time for practice fit well the elements of strength of the teaching /learning cycle which form the bulk of genre-based writing methodology.

While our analysis represents the comments of only a small sample of teachers and students compared to the ever growing population of teachers and students in different English language departments across the country, and should, therefore, be treated cautiously ,we believe these practice patterns are used more widely and ,thus, our findings have potential implication for writing pedagogy in the Algerian context of higher education.These results demonstrate the existence of great deal of discrepancy between the writing course in terms of objectives ,approaches ,genres as well as the type and focus of feedback.Hence ,the relevance of the theory and research based pedagogic solution suggested to bridge the existing gap ; Developing learners ‘discipline-specific academic writing competence necessitates the adoption of a unified genre-based approach that emphasizes the cognitive ,social ,and linguistic demands of the specific academic subjects in the English curriculum.The essay being a well established academic genre should serve as the only writing teaching and evaluation measure in all the language-based modules of the curriculum with a specific focus on the argumentative type.Equally important is the necessity to demystify the writing evaluation process so as to render the content module teachers’expectations and feedback more transparent to the students through replacing the currently widely used holistic correction and feedback by genre-based analytical criterion-referenced procedures.The following section provides an example of the design and teaching of the argumentative essay in the module of linguistics following the principles of the proposed solution.

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

Teaching the Argumentative Essay in Linguistics :an Outline for a Unit of Work

We will now turn to presenting an outline of a unit of work designed following the principles of the proposed solution.

Objectives:

1-To equip students with specialist language and the key linguistic vocabulary that students will need along with words and phrases commonly used in the field of linguistics.

2-To make students familiar with how experts in the field of linguistics perceive and use scientific knowledge and how this influence communication forms (the essay in our case)

3-To raise students 'awareness to the lexico-grammar features that enable them to analyze the textual trace of writer stance and to express their own stances.

4-Tasks to activate schemata to write arguments steps and moves in Hyland's (1990) modal

5-To demystify the argumentative essay assessment process through the use of analytic procedures

Level: Preferably students who have started specializing in Science du Langage and applied linguistics.

Duration: about a three weeks periods on a basis of three sessions per week.

This unit of work for teaching the argumentative essay in the subject area of linguistics uses the genre-description of the argumentative essay provided by Hyland (1990), in which the schematic structure of the argumentative essay genre is expressed in terms of *moves* and *steps*, to present ,deconstruct ,and scaffold students 'reconstruction of examples of the same genre in the subject area of linguistics.In this unit of work which can be implemented in several sessions,the students should be guided through the process of producing an argumentative essay in the module of linguistics .The process genre-based approach applies the three concepts of scaffolding, mediation and collaborative learning to the academic writing process throughout the writing of their argumentative essays linked to the study themes of the module of linguistics .Scaffolding includes a number of the defining features of academic writing of argumentative essays in the field of linguistics. The scaffolding in the unit of work should aim to articulate the following features:

-Topics linked to controversial issues in the subject area of linguistics (such as empiricism vs.nativism in the field of language acquisition viewed from the different existing theoretical perspectives).Some interesting topics of this type can be found in Hakuta and McLaughlin (1996) article entitled Seven tensions that define research in bilingualism and second language acquisition(can be

retrieved at [http://faculty2.ucmerced.edu/khakuta/research/publications/\(1996\)](http://faculty2.ucmerced.edu/khakuta/research/publications/(1996))

-A predetermined argumentative essay structure using the schematic structure of the argumentative essay proposed by Hyland (1990) and expressed in terms of steps and moves ,The article in question can be retrieved at (<http://www2.caes.hku.hk/kenhyland/files/2012/08/A-genre-description-of-the-argumentative-essay.pdf>).

-The pre-writing stage of each section should involve students' analysis of the move structure on the basis of Hyland's modal of selected argumentative essays produced by the same students or their mates who have a similar level in the field of linguistics so that instruction takes place within these students' zone of proximal development .

-Staged instruction ,focusing on one section of the essay each week with special emphasis on the introduction and conclusion, and in line with the pedagogy of the teaching/learning cycle.

- Extensive modelling of the composition process

-Focus on developing a metalanguage for arguments and the use of the notions of theme, modality and nominalisation to reposition them as authoritative writers in the subject area in question.

-Regular mostly online feedback from peers and the tutor.

In order to raise students' genre awareness of the rhetorical structure of the argumentative essay in linguistics, the initial tasks should aim to raise the learners' awareness to the issue of writer's stance addressing a disciplinary audience. Given the importance of audience to the formulation of a stance ,students should be given tasks that raise their awareness of audience analysis. To streamline the analysis of the audience , a handout containing the questions [based on Bruce (2008:...)] can be used .

The introductory lessons should also aim to explain the schematic structure of the argumentative essay proposed by Hyland (1990) (can be retrieved from...) ,the metalanguage and jargon used in it. In addition to that ,the objectives and the methodology routine of the teaching sequence should be explained to the students. In this regard , the genre-based methodology aims at 'destabilizing' their theories about the rhetorical structure of the factual argumentative essay genre within their zone of proximal development where each writing session starts with an analysis of texts and ends with production of texts.

Concerning apprenticeship in forging an authorial voice in the field of linguistics, the instructor can provide a gist of advice on writing essays in linguistics based especially on Finch (1999) who argues that

'...linguistics is one subject where it's possible to make your own contribution...no one is expecting you to invent a new theory, but there

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

are always fresh usages, and new bits of linguistic structure, which are continually emerging. In contrast with literary texts, the 'text' of linguistics is continuously evolving. It's not fixed and finite but endlessly fertile and self-renewing. In studying it you are studying not only something you possess, but something you are possessed by...' Finch (1998:224)

In the field of linguistics, students can debate topics and to be free to choose to take a stance instead of the reconciliatory position that the majority of them have the habit of adopting in their exam. The most important thing is that this stance reflects their conviction, and that they are able to search in the literature for relevant examples and evidence to support this stance and to persuade their readers. The reader, in this case, should not be just the subject area module teacher, but a wider imaginary audience within the discipline. The schism between the rationalist and empiricist, for example, can serve as a modal for stimulating arguments in the writing classroom. The stance adopted by each of these major schools has had direct repercussions on their view towards what constitutes scientific knowledge and evidence, and has been reflected in their differences about research methodology. Whereas the innatists believe that linguistics should focus on the description of the competence of an ideal speaker hearer using introspection. The behaviourists take into consideration only the observable behavior that they study using the principles of the scientific method.

In this model, setting up the context of the genre and building field-knowledge are generalized across all stages of the model (Deconstruction, Joint construction, and Independent Construction) 'Martin (2000:118)(Feez :1998). Following this sequence, the essay genre in question should be broken down into its sub-genre parts (the thesis stage, the argument, and the conclusion. Then, each sub-genre should be broken down into the constituent features of move structure. This would include the following steps:

Deconstruction:

- Distribute typed samples of sub-parts of the students' sample exam essays along side with the corresponding part of Hyland's model and an authentic paragraph. The students analyse, compare, and discuss the structure with the instructor

Joint construction:

- Ask students to aggregate into groups of four or five. Encourage them to collaborate to write an example of the text and to give relevant feedback to improve the text. Ask each group to produce jointly an improved example of the text, and encourage them to seek assistance from the teacher.

- Ask volunteer students to board in order to write jointly a common sample of the text. Provide online feedback on different aspects of academic style

especially theme, modality, nominalization and discipline-specific lexis to scaffold the students' text. The aim is to enable students to structure argument with conviction, purpose and point of view.

- Ask the students to write down the sample part of the essay written jointly and to keep it for the subsequent lessons.

Independent Construction:

- Ask Each student to write his own example of the text and to keep a portfolio of his different performances in the classroom so as to submit them subsequently for correction. Each week should be devoted to the a part or stage of the argumentative essay genre (thesis stage, argument stage, conclusion stage).

Concerning the issue of assessment, in order to situate the instruction within the students zone of proximal development, the exam copies in the module of linguistics belonging to the same group of students should be analysed so as to get an overall impression about the students writing problems in the genre under study, and in the light of this, select a sample. These essays, then, should be typed and the identities of their authors should be kept unanimous. Each essay should be broken into its major constituent parts (Introduction, Argument, and Conclusion). Hyland (2004: 176) provides an example of an analytic scoring rubric for the argumentative essay that can be used by the students in the evaluation of their writing as well as by both the writing and the content area teachers to standardize and demystify the evaluation process.

Conclusion

As far as the results obtained from the analysis of the data are concerned, it has been concluded that there is little appreciation of the importance and centrality of the writing skill in general and essay writing in particular to students academic success. The great deal of division observed among teachers and confirmed by students about objectives, the approaches, the assessment tools, the writing resources as well as the focus of feedback in the teaching and evaluation of writing across the curriculum is a proof of the prevalence of non-theory based eclecticism. This anomalous state of things is detrimental to both the development of students' academic writing competence and the professionalization process of teachers. In addition to that, there is no uniform agreement on the place and role of the essay in general and the argumentative genre in particular as a teaching and assessment tool across the curriculum. In the same vein, there is no clear conception of the chain of writing genres required in the English curriculum coupled with a little appreciation among the teachers as the students at different levels about the generic aspects and the discipline-specific aspects of essay writing across the curriculum. The teachers are not certainly to blame for this alarming situation; quite on the contrary, in spite of their knowledge, enthusiasm, and virtuousness, the fact that the responsibility to design their courses, to implement them, and to create tests to

Forging Discipline-specific Authorial Voice through Genre : the Role and Place of the Argumentative Essay

evaluate their students 'achievement falls to them while they are juggling with other professional tasks and preparing their doctorate theses leave them with no time to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction and assessment tools let alone to explore ways of keeping them abreast with the new developments in the field. Certainly there is a need for decisions to be taken at a higher level in order to adopt a global fix for this problem.

These results demonstrate the relevance of the theory and research based pedagogic solution suggested to bridge the existing gap ; Developing learners 'discipline-specific academic writing competence necessitates the adoption of a unified genre-based approach that emphasizes the cognitive ,social ,and linguistic demands of the specific academic subjects in the English curriculum. The essay being a well established academic genre should serve as the only writing teaching and evaluation measure in all the language-based modules of the curriculum with a specific focus on the argumentative type. Equally important is the necessity to demystify the writing evaluation process so as to render the content module teachers' expectations and feedback more transparent to the students through replacing the currently widely used holistic correction and feedback by genre-based analytical criterion-referenced procedures.

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