11. GENRE MODELS FOR THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING TO SECOND LANGUAGE SPEAKERS: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

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This paper reports on work in the area of genre analysis, particularly in the teaching of academic writing. It argues that there are dangers in an over-prescriptive approach to the teaching of academic writing using the models for the different sections of an article as if they are valid for all disciplines and for various other related genres. The paper nonetheless concludes that there is much value in a genre approach that draws on more recent work in the sociology of knowledge and the rhetoric of disciplines as well as the linguistic analysis of the academic article. The paper recommends further research into two other key genres: the essay and the thesis.

Introduction

The work of genre analysis, especially the various analyses inspired by the original work of Swales (1981), has had a profound influence on the teaching of English for Specific Purposes, especially the teaching of academic writing to graduate students. The various analyses of the introduction (Swales, 1981a and 1990) the discussion section (Dudley-Evans, 1994; Hopkins and Dudley-Evans, 1988), the abstract (Salager-Meyer, 1990; Ayers, 1993) and the results section (Thompson, 1993) have all informed approaches to the teaching of academic writing. These studies have also been applied to teaching materials for graduate students who need both a 'rhetorical awareness' of the texts that they have to write for their departments and a 'linguistic awareness' of the range of language forms that can be used to express the basic rhetoric of the academic papers they write.

Two textbooks, one entitled *Writing Up Research* (Weissberg and Buker, 1990) and the other *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (Swales and Feak, 1994), are good examples of a genre approach in action. But there are many

other examples of unpublished material that take account of the findings of genre analysis. Some of these materials are reported on in Belcher and Braine's excellent volume on the teaching of academic writing in a second language (Belcher and Braine, 1995); articles of particular interest in this regard are those by Johns, Jacoby *et al.* and Dudley-Evans (all 1995).

In this paper I wish to consider the approach to the teaching of academic writing that arises from the findings of genre analysis and the value of particular models to the ESP teacher and materials writer. The paper will focus on the work arising from the EAP genre school while recognizing that much similar work has developed in Australia under the influence of the work emanating from the Sydney school of genre analysis that developed from the systemic school of linguistics headed by Halliday (Halliday and Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1989). The Australian work has largely been put into practice with native speakers in the school system, while the EAP work has been more directly focused on the teaching of non-native speaker graduate students, which is our concern here.

Basic Approach

The basic philosophy of a genre approach is entirely consistent with an ESP approach. It assumes that the focus on imparting certain genre knowledge is part of a 'short-cut' method of raising students' proficiency in a relatively limited period of time to the level required of them by their departments and supervisors. The imparting of genre knowledge involves increasing awareness of the conventions of writing, and teaching students to produce texts that, by following the conventions, appear well-formed and suitably structured to native-speaker readers. Indeed, it has been argued that 'knowledge of organization, arrangement, form and genre' can systematically lead to knowledge of subject matter (Belcher, 1995 and Jollife & Brier, 1988 cited in Belcher, 1995). Furthermore, work with native speakers (Torrance *et al.*, 1993; Torrance, forthcoming) has confirmed that a genre approach is an effective means of increasing writing proficiency.

Nonetheless, genre approaches remain controversial. There are those who believe that a genre approach takes the writing teacher beyond the basic responsibility of introducing students to the 'processes' of writing into disciplinary concerns that should be handled by the subject teacher (e.g. Spack, 1988). There are others who argue that the concentration on a limited number of classroom genres (as suggested by Kress, 1982) may have unfortunate educational

consequences by privileging certain stereotypic genres that are 'debilitating in terms of making meanings' (Dixon, 1982: 18) and prevent the development of an awareness of alternative forms. Similarly, Widdowson (1983) has warned of the dangers of implying a necessarily strong relationship between form and function in teaching writing on the basis of 'moves.' In a similar vein, Brookes and Grundy (1990: 29) see the danger of genre becoming 'a rather restrictive master.'

Others have criticized genre analysis for failure to consider the broader context of academic writing. Writing scholars such as Bazerman (1989) and Myers (1990a), although essentially sympathetic to the aims of genre analysis, have suggested that the initial work on 'moves' in genre analysis suffers from not having considered the disciplinary environment in which academic writing takes place and which has a major influence on the nature and form of the communication. In a similar vein, Prior (1995) is critical of the tendency of genre analysts to concentrate exclusively on the text and to neglect the ongoing discussions between faculty (staff) and students that both frame and influence the nature of the actual writing carried out.

As a result of these and other criticisms, genre analysis is now much more inclined to talk of 'tendencies' and of 'family resemblances' rather than claim that genres have a certain fixed form and that examples that do not conform to the established model should be discounted. The changes in genre analysis can be traced through a discussion of the view of 'move.' In Swales' original work on article introductions (Swales, 1981) and in the analyses of those working in that tradition (e.g. Dudley-Evans, 1986; McKinlay, 1982; Peng, 1987) moves are seen as text elements that are obligatory if the text is to be acceptable as an example of the genre. This is certainly the case with Swales' model for article introductions; Swales originally suggested that there were four basic moves:

Introduction	
Move 1:	Establishing the Field
Move 2:	Summarising Previous Research
Move 3:	Preparing for Present Research
	(often by identifying a gap in previous research)
Move 4:	Introducing Present Research

These four moves are present in the majority of the introductions analyzed (approximately 75% in the original analysis). This obligatory presence and ordering applies less to the moves in the discussion section, but here it is a case of certain logical sequences of moves in which, once a choice has been made to follow a certain route, the writer is obliged to follow with a certain sequence of moves. Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) suggested the following moves as characteristic of the discussion section:

Discussion
1. Background Information
2. Statement of results
3. (Un)expected result
4. Reference to previous research (comparison)
5. Explanation of Unsatisfactory Result
6. Exemplification
7. Deduction and Hypothesis (since modified to Claim)[1]
8. Reference to Previous Research (in support of a claim)
9. Recommendation
10. Justification

These moves occur in cycles in which the writer chooses an appropriate sequence of moves. Thus, although only certain moves occur in a given cycle, it would be wrong to consider certain moves, e.g., *Statement of Results* as obligatory and others optional in the way that Halliday and Hasan (1989) do. The moves occur in sequences in which once a certain move is chosen the writer is obliged to follow with other specified moves. Thus a Move 3 would normally have to be followed by a Move 5 explaining why the result was unsatisfactory; similarly a Move 7 (now called a *Claim*) will normally be followed by a Move 8 supporting the *Claim*. It may also be inappropriate to call these sequences of moves 'cycles' as this implies repetition rather than development of an argument; Hozayen (1994) prefers to refer to 'move con-figurations.'

The influence of writing scholars and sociologists of science that we have referred to above (notably Bazerman, 1989; Myers, 1990a; and Latour & Woolgar, 1979) have led to a realization that an analysis of moves, however useful pedagogically, may be rather unidimensional in that it concentrates almost exclusively on what is there in the text and may not account adequately for the writer's rhetorical strategy. Mauranen (1993) has suggested a distinction between 'generic' and 'rhetorical' moves, the latter reflecting the writer's strategy in constructing an argument. While the notion of a rhetorical move is clear and useful, it is not immediately clear what Mauranen sees as constituting a generic move.

Adapted Move Models

Swales' adapted model for the article introduction (Swales, 1990a: 141) not only takes account of a number of reported difficulties in applying the original four-move model but also shows greater sensitivity to writers' rhetorical or 'social' purposes in structuring and wording the introduction. His categories appear rather more 'sociological' than linguistic. They are:

Introduction		
Move 1	Establishing a Territory	
Move 2	Establishing a Niche by	
	Step 1A	Counter-Claiming
		or
	Step 1B	Indicating a Gap
		or
	Step 1C	Question Raising
		or
	Step 1D	Continuing a Tradition
Move 3	Occupying the Niche [2]	

A similar adaptation of the original work on the moves suggested for the *Discussion of Results* section (Hopkins and Dudley-Evans) has been made by

Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995: 41). They argue that the moves can be ordered into a set of higher level units that reflect the moves posited for the introduction. These moves are essentially the same as those in the introduction, but are in reverse order.

Discussion	
Move 1	Occupying the Niche
Move 2	(Re)establishing the Field
Move 3	Establishing Additional Territory

I have argued that the adapted models for moves in the article introduction and discussion described above have to a large extent answered criticisms that moves fail to take account of the broader context of academic writing.

However, the question still remains of whether the use of moves in the teaching of academic writing, especially in teaching graduate students to write dissertations, is justified. If we follow the argument put forward by Dixon (1982), we may, by teaching a system of moves, be imposing an over-rigid model of writing that runs the risk of restricting rather than encouraging the individual writers in the expression of the ideas they wish to put forward. It can be shown clearly that the early genre analysts were not advocating rigid models of the texts they analysed and would be embarrassed by the rather unthinking applications of their analyses. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that some teaching of writing has suffered from lack of flexibility, and that the moves suggested for the introduction section have sometimes been applied to other genres, e.g. the essay, or part-genres,[3] e.g. the abstract, for which they are inappropriate.

Approaches to Teaching

Two issues are relevant here. The first is the question of how prescriptive teaching based on genre analysis should be. The second is the extent to which the teaching of academic writing to non-native speakers differs from similar teaching to native speakers.

The question of prescription related to genre analysis is an extremely difficult one. Much material seems to follow a pattern of introducing a model of a particular part-genre such as the introduction or the discussion, developing

familiarity with the pattern of organization in that part-genre through exercises that involve some kind of mini genre analysis on the part of the student. This is followed by exercises that introduce and manipulate relevant language forms. The sequence of exercises is then rounded off by an activity which requires the writing of a short text that brings together both the generic and the linguistic features practiced in the unit.

While this basic sequence has many merits, there is a clear danger that in the hands of an insensitive or inexperienced ESP teacher it will become over-prescriptive. Variations in the moves used in the part-genre need to be acknowledged, and variety in the linguistic forms for the expression of the moves needs to be encouraged. Genre analysis is still at a relatively early stage of development, and much more work is needed before we can be confident that the models specifying the moves used in different part-genres accurately reflect the range of possibilities in different academic disciplines and the choices open to the writer. A good example is that of the Abstract where it has been argued (Salager-Meyer, 1990) that the typical pattern of moves found in an abstract is *Purpose - Method - Results - Conclusion/Recommendations*. But as Ayers (1993) notes, 48% of the abstracts Salager-Meyer surveyed in medical journals do not match this model and suggests that these abstracts are 'flawed.' She does not appear to consider the possibility that the model for abstracts that she has developed may be over-simplified.

A key factor to consider here is how much experience students have had of writing either in their first or second language. It is not uncommon to find that some international students at British universities have had relatively little experience of extensive academic writing even in their first language. Their undergraduate course may have been dominated by lectures and the examinations by multiple choice answers or answers that involve much more calculation than writing. Such students will need a fairly basic introduction to conventions of writing and the expectations about what an essay, a technical report or a thesis will involve. These students will also need more detailed work on the moves of different sections of theses and their language exponents.

With students who have had experience of writing, either in their first language or in English, the situation is very different. They are aware of the basic features of academic writing, but need to become aware of how these features differ in English academic writing from their own language. At one level, students need to develop greater sensitivity to ways in which they can use

the conventions to develop their individual expression and to make their own impact on the discipline. At a lower level they need to develop a wide repertoire of linguistic exponents of the various moves that they wish to make. The situation with native speakers is similar, except that they will normally already have a fairly wide repertoire of linguistic exponents.

Genre analysis is particularly useful for the students with relatively little experience of writing. As Brookes and Grundy (1990) have argued, this will usually be in three stages, the first being the reading stage that precedes the writing stage. An awareness of the generic structure of the texts read will have a positive effect on future writing. The second is the immediate planning stage (Brookes and Grundy, 1990: 28) where the findings of genre analysis will help writers grasp what is expected in the genre they are proposing to write. The third stage is the draft stage in which an awareness of genre conventions will help in the ordering and re-ordering of text.

With students with relatively little experience of writing it has been found that Swales' original four-move model for the introduction and Hopkins and Dudley-Evans' (1988) ten-move model for the discussion section have been very effective for teaching purposes. Their more explicitly linguistic orientation and greater concern with the exponents of the moves probably account for this. The dangers of an over-prescriptive approach are, of course, particularly strong with these students, especially as they themselves may be looking for the answer to their writing difficulties. But it is possible to strike the right balance by teaching the model for the genre as a means of structuring ideas and as the basis for the introduction of relevant linguistic forms.

With students with a considerable experience of academic writing, either in their first language or English (thus including native speakers), the genre approach needs to emphasize genre as a means of marshalling ideas into an appropriately ordered and expressed text. Genre analysis provides a way of introducing and discussing the expectations of the academic community in general and the discourse community that the students aspire to join in ways that are comprehensible to both the language teacher and the student. In this regard, Swales' more socially oriented three-move model and Berkenkotter and Huckin's model for the discussion section have proved more effective as a launching pad for discussions about issues about writer stance, the need to make appropriate use of hedging or politeness strategies in presenting claims and the need to use persuasive rhetoric to establish a niche for research and the validity

of claims. The models provide the basis for discussion about the difficulties and opportunities for students in finding the right balance between what they want to say as individuals and how they wish to express it, and the expectations of the discourse community. It has often been argued that the 'apprentice' writer has less freedom than the experienced and established writer in adapting or flouting the conventions; nonetheless there is still the opportunity to mould the template of the genre to meet particular needs. Some examples are in order here. In the first exercise quoted below (taken from academic writing materials used at the University of Birmingham[4]) students have to think about explanations, how likely the explanation for the given situation they provide is, and therefore how 'hedged' the explanation needs to be:

Exercise

Eight situations are listed below. You will be allocated 3 or 4 of them. You should think of three explanations for each one and list them in your personal order of likelihood.

Next, in pairs, describe in turn one of your situations and give your explanations. The speaker's choice of language should enable the listener to note down the explanation in order of likelihood (so don't always give your ideas in the same order).

At the end compare the completed tables. If they are not identical, there has been some breakdown in communication which you should discuss.

Situation	most likely		least likely
a. the failure of the coffee crop b. the brittleness of a piece of metal c. the crack in a road pavement d. an unexpected loss of heat energy e. the failure of the potato crop f. the fracture of a piston g. a breakdown in the assembly line h. unemployment in Britain			

The second exercise type has a similar function to that described by Swales (1995:13) illustrating some of the principles of the textbook *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (Swales and Feak, 1994). In the exercise students read a short text and are asked to say whether four comments made by the supervisor (advisor) are justified or not. This engages students in thinking both about the expect-ations of the academic community and of their relationship with their supervisor. It is not uncommon for students to be surprised that it may be possible to take up and disagree with points made by their supervisor.

Conclusion

In this short paper I have attempted to describe some of the dangers of adopting a genre approach to the teaching of writing, but have argued that, despite these dangers, such an approach has much to offer, both to the inexperienced and experienced writer.

As in most of the work in using a genre approach for English for Academic Purposes work, I have focused on the teaching of academic writing and the use of research into the academic writing in teaching graduate students to write research papers. I have recognized the dangers of an over-prescriptive approach that implies that all that students have to do is learn a basic move structure for each of the sections of the research paper.

There is, however, another danger. There is a considerable body of research into the nature and structure of the academic article. Although some variation according to discipline and degree of formality of the journal in which the article is published has been noted, the academic article does appear to have a predictable structure that is widely recognized.[5] This is not the case with the other main genres that students need to be able to write in an academic context: the essay and the thesis. Attempts to apply a move approach to both the analysis of the essay and to the teaching of essay writing have not, at least to date, come up with anything as tangible or as practical as the models for the different sections of the article. Similarly, little work has yet been reported on the thesis, apart from a number of 'how to write your thesis' handbooks and some work on the rather shorter and more limited MSc thesis written on a British-taught Masters course (Dudley-Evans, 1986; Hopkins and Dudley-Evans, 1988; Dudley-Evans, 1994). Given the increasing numbers of students, especially international students, undertaking Ph.D. level research, much more work needs to be done to establish the particular characteristics of the thesis, and

determine how it differs from the research article. Is the thesis simply an extended version of the article, with different chapters corresponding to the different sections of the article? Or does each main chapter that presents a particular study follow its own Introduction/Methods/Results/Discussion (IMRD) format? Do the findings about down-grading of the Methods sections in articles (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995) apply to theses? Does Thompson's (1993) finding that *Results* sections in Biochemistry papers contain a significant amount of commentary also apply to theses? Do the Berkenkotter and Huckin's, and Hopkins and Dudley-Evans' models for the *Discussion* section of an article or MSc dissertation work for a Ph.D. thesis discussion? How does the *Review of the Literature* chapter that a thesis will virtually always contain relate to the *Introduction*, which will also contain references to the relevant literature? The answers to these questions will greatly enhance the range of genre analysis and the teaching of academic writing to graduate students.

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Notes:

1. In the original model these were two separate moves

2. The full Move/Step model is not given here; it can be found in Swales (1990:141)

3. 'Part-genre' is a term coined by Ayers (1993) to describe a section of a full genre that has its own specific pattern of organization. An introduction to an academic article cannot be described as a genre as it is only one section of the genre of the academic article, but, as Swales (1981 and 1990) has shown, it does have its own distinctive pattern of organization, which is different from that used in other sections of the

article. Hence the need for the term 'part-genre.'

4. This particular exercise was devised by M.J. St. John.

5. It should be noted, however, that the Anglo-American model for academic articles now widely used internationally, does differ from models favoured in what we might call 'other national rhetorical styles.' For discussion of this point see Mauranen (1993).