

Designing a Genre-Based Writing Course for ESP Learners

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Abstract.

Considering the needs of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners, it is important to make them practice language skills which they can use efficiently in their professions. In this sense, writing, which is one of the productive skills, can be supported by means of different genre types as an instructional material in ESP settings. This study examines the importance of Genre-Based Instruction (GBI) in an ESP context. The aim of the study is primarily to demonstrate how to conduct genre analysis. Secondly, it is aimed to show how GBI can be utilized in order to teach writing for ESP learners by suggesting a sample writing course which is assumed to be beneficial for raising genre awareness of ESP learners about their field of study. Hence, it is expected that designing a course in the scope of GBI can be helpful for ESP learners to comprehend the structural organization and communicative purpose of the texts which can be advantageous for their future success.

Keywords: Genre, Genre-Based Instruction (GBI), ESP Learners, Writing skill

Introduction

It is evident that writing is one of the important productive skills in language learning process. Accordingly, it is crucial to conduct writing courses that enable language learners to use and practice language via various materials and activities. Especially, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners require different instructional tools related to their field of study. As study area of ESP learners differ from each other, it would be effective for language teachers to utilize distinctive and related materials which will be useful for their learners' future professions. For this reason, Genre-Based Instruction (GBI) can be used in order to design and enrich writing courses in ESP settings.

Genre analysis is the indispensable part of GBI as teaching language is provided with the results gathered from genre analysis. In this sense, genre analysis studies how language is practiced in certain contexts (Swales, 1990) and examines the communicative purpose of the texts by identifying the role of the writer and the audience, and the context in which the genre is used (Osman, 2004). In this respect, genre analysis enables ESP learners to study on the genres linguistically and identify the different types of discourses that they will provide them with better comprehension and usage in terms of improving their writing skills.

As stated by Mavor & Trayner (2001), it is essential for ESP practitioners to have a clear understanding of discursive practices required by the professions which their learners will possess at the end of their academic programmes. Consequently, it would be beneficial for ESP practitioners to master the subjects required by the disciplines and find out the essential texts that will be useful for their learners according to their field of study (Faigley & Hansen, 1985). In this case, it is advisable for ESP practitioners to know the proper genres required by a profession and the situations when they are applied. Starting from this point of view, this study aims to present a sample writing course based on GBI for ESP learners who are attending the Department of Accounting. For this reason, invoices as a genre type are analyzed and suggested as an instructional material that is assumed to be effective in ESP settings.

Literature Review

The term *genre* is commonly used as a type of discourse that involves a set of communicative actions having specific and communicative functions (Swales, 1990). Accordingly, genre analysis deals with how language is used in a particular context. As each genre has a different purpose, genre analysis employs different patterns of structure and organization to attain its purpose. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) also emphasize that genre awareness is a crucial factor particularly in writing academic or professional texts as it includes comprehending the expectations of the readers in terms of discourse and the principles that have developed through time in relation to the organization, the language and the style of the genre.

Considered from this aspect, GBI aims to identify the lexio-grammatical features of genres that are selected by expert users for achieving communicative purposes and demonstrate how and why they are used in terms of social and psychological settings (Henry & Roseberry, 1998). As stressed by Mansfield (1993), GBI

introduces students the real world writing which enables them to manage the professional genres. In this respect, it is significant for students to get exposed to genre types in ESP classrooms which would be practical and useful in their workplaces in the future.

There are many scholars that have suggested models of genre analysis. For instance, according to the model proposed by Cope & Kalantzis (1993), genre analysis involves four stages as modeling, guiding, practising and lastly independently writing the genre. Another model by Bhatia (1993) suggests seven steps of genre analysis which are placing the given genre-text in a situational context, surveying existing literature, refining the situational / contextual analysis, selecting corpus, studying the institutional context, levels of linguistic analysis and specialist information in genre analysis. Regarding these two models, Osman (2004) puts forward that Bhatia's model regards the cognitive processes (C) while Cope and Kalantzis's model focuses on the physical processes (P). Based on these models, Osman (2004, p.21-22) further developed Genre-Corpus-Based Instruction Approach including four stages 1) Guiding learners to understand the code of the specialist genre (C), Exposing learners to models of the target genre (P), 2) Guiding learners to acquire genre knowledge associated with the specialist culture (C), Guiding learners to analyse the structural patterns (P), 3) Developing learners' sensitivity to the cognitive structuring of specialist genres (C), Providing learners with practice to construct the genre (P), 4) Guiding learners to exploit generic knowledge of a repertoire of specialist genres by becoming informed users of the discourse of their chosen field (C), Assigning the learners to independently construct the genres (P).

On the other hand, it is essential to get prepared for the implementation of GBI before conducting the ESP course. In parallel with this notion, certain steps are required to be followed in order to perform GBI in ESP settings. Firstly, it is important to choose a genre type which is useful for ESP students considering their academic programmes. Moreover, it is necessary for ESP practitioners to be acquainted with the background information about the structure of the selected genre type. Subsequently, it is essential to conduct content analysis to *identify the communicative purposes* of genres. For the next step, *identification of rhetorical moves* is required to analyse the structural organization of the genre type (Osman, 2004). Here, a move is regarded as the part of the text that is formed by a particular communicative function (Holmes, 1997) or which is performed by the writer to reach a specific purpose surrounded by the text (Henry & Roseberry, 2001, cited in Osman, 2004). Therefore, it would be effective to follow the suggested steps in order to design an efficient writing course in ESP settings.

Researchers have been currently interested in benefiting from GBI for ESP learners. In this case, there are studies that have examined the efficiency of implementing GBI in terms of writing skill in ESP contexts. Of those, Tuan (2011) investigated the effect of genre-based approach both on learners' writing performance and their attitudes towards using genre-based approach in terms of developing writing skill in Vietnamese context. The results of the study revealed that learners increased consciousness and managed to deal with the fundamental features of the necessary recount genre.

Wang (2013) examined the impact of genre approach on raising learners' genre awareness in China. For conducting the study, a 16-week genre instruction was implemented. The writing course involved different kinds of genres such as self-introduction, letters, notes, notices, curriculum vitas and abstracts. The study signifies that genre approach helps learners to promote genre awareness, develop their writing skills and enrich lexical density.

Another study by Vaezi & Tabrizi (2016) explored the efficiency of employing genre-based approach in teaching writing for ESP learners in Iranian context. In the study, tourist information texts were used as a genre type. The results showed that using genre-based approach is useful for improving writing skill of ESP intermediate learners.

Rashidi & Mazdayasna (2016) also studied the contribution of GBI to the improvement of EFL students' writing skills. The participants were Iranian textile engineering students. In this study, business letters were chosen as a genre type. The results of the study demonstrated that not only participants developed their writing skills but also gained genre awareness and produced superior texts by having been exposed to GBI.

Considering Turkish context, Uzun (2016) examined whether GBI develops the organization of essays written by second year university students in the scope of their English Literature Course and revealed their opinions in relation to GBI. In his study, GBI process was applied for four weeks and theme analysis essays were used for conducting the course. The study illustrates that GBI promotes the use of communicative moves in terms of theme analysis essays and most students had a positive attitude towards GBI.

Having examined the existing literature, this study is supposed to be enlightening in terms of examining invoices as a genre type since it will enrich the literature by including a different genre type as an instructional tool of a writing course which can be used for ESP learners.

Conducting Genre Analysis for Invoices

In this study, five different texts, namely *invoices*, are chosen in order to carry out genre analysis. The reason for choosing invoices as a genre type is to provide samples for specifically students attending the Department of Accounting. Using these texts in their English writing courses is assumed to be useful and efficient for their professions as they will be exposed to those kinds of texts in their workplace in the future. The steps followed while analyzing the text type are given below:

1. Collect samples: Regarding the analysis, 5 written texts (invoices) were selected. In its simplest definition; invoice is 'a list of goods that have been supplied or work that has been done, showing how much you owe for them' (Longman, Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003). In this sense, it presents a compulsion on the side of the purchaser to pay, making an account receivable.

2. Identify the scene: Invoice is used only for business purposes, and it is a payment related document in which a seller provides the deal information made between him and the buyer. It justifies the fact that the sale is considered to have taken place, and payment is made or not. For this reason, it can be used when a customer would like to know the details of their purchase and what they are paying for.

There are different types of invoices such as pro forma invoice, credit memo, commercial invoice, service invoice, debit memo, self-billing invoice, timesheet, electronic invoicing, and so on. However; for this genre analysis, pro forma invoices (2), commercial invoices (2) and a service invoice (1) are chosen so as to present different types of invoice texts to the students.

The information mentioned above indicates that an invoice is a kind of written document which tells the buyer how much is owed, and when it has to be paid. In other words, it can be regarded as a document requesting payment for a good or service provided to the recipient. In this respect, the general scene of this genre involves a group of participants (buyers, sellers) who have the shared objective of keeping an official record of the sale to the customer and the very first request for payment made to that customer. They are generally in paper or electronic format, and can be issued by the supplier (the person who supplies the goods or services), the purchaser (the person who receives the supplies), or a contractor (outsourcing to a third party to the transaction who is engaged to issue invoices).

3. Analyze the patterns:

- ✓ Identification of Communicative Purpose(s) – Content Analysis
 1. Giving information about the product/service.
 2. Giving information about the cost of the products.
 3. Informing the buyer about delivery details (i.e. shipping)
 4. Informing the buyer about payment details.
 5. Giving evidence about whether goods, products, or services are being prepared for the company.
- ✓ Identification of Rhetorical Moves – the Structural Organisation

Table 1: Rhetorical Moves in Invoices

| Moves | Description | Frequency |
|---|--|-----------|
| Identifying the Seller (I) | Providing the name of the company | 100 % |
| Attracting the reader attention (A) | Giving information about the company's name, logo, and/or slogan. | 100% |
| Targeting the delivery (T) | Describing shipping/delivery details | 80 % |
| Establishing credentials (C) | Stating the invoice and/or customer reference number for control reasons | 100 % |
| Justifying the sale (J) | Providing the name and contact information about the buyer and/or the seller | 100 % |
| Describing the sale(S) | Describing the name of the sale | 100 % |
| Identifying the feature of the product (F) | Providing the quality and /or quantity of the product/service | 80 % |
| Indicating the value of the product (V) | Describing the unit and total price of the product/service | 100 % |
| Endorsing the sale (E) | Stating the date of the sale | 100 % |
| Describing terms of payment (D) | Providing maximum amount of days for payment of the product/service | 60 % |

As it is displayed in Table 1, moves **I**, **A**, **E**, **J**, **P**, **V**, and **S** are obligatory; whereas move **T**, **F** and **D** are optional.

Table 2: Sequence of Moves in Invoices

| Invoice | Sequence of Moves |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Pro forma Invoice- 1 | I-A-I-T-C-E-F-S-V |
| Pro forma Invoice- 2 | I-E-J-T-S-F-V-I |
| Commercial Invoice-1 | A-I-C-J-E-D-S-F-V |
| Commercial Invoice- 2 | I-A-E-C-J-S-V-D-J |
| Service Invoice | I-A-J-E-C-S-V-J |

It is apparent in Table 2 that there is no common sequence of moves which indicates that the moves are irregular in invoices. Moreover, of nine moves, two of the invoices use eight moves. It is also worth pointing out that some moves such as *Identifying the Seller (I)* and *Justifying the order (J)* are seen twice in two of the invoices. This shows that some information needs to be redoubled in certain invoices.

Considering the rhetorical and linguistic patterns of this genre type; beginning with content, it can be seen that each invoice contains individual prices, the total charge, and the terms for goods sold or services provided. It also includes detailed information about contact information about the buyers and sellers, description of the items purchased (either products or services), and terms of payment. The structure of invoices can basically be divided three main parts: *the header, body and footer*. ("Sample Invoice", 2018).

✓ **Invoice Header (Top part):**

- Letterhead: Company name, address, telephone and e-mail
- The word "invoice" is visibly indicated at the top of the page.
- An invoice number: Only one serial number for each invoice
- Date
- Terms related to payment or when payment is expected.
- The name and address of the purchaser

✓ **Invoice Body:**

- An explanation of the goods delivery, amount, unit of measure, price and total amount for individual items.

✓ **Invoice Footer (Bottom part)**

- Total Amount of all individual items. If valid, a tax amount and total after tax.
- Payment information if required.
- Other remarks like delivery information, goods return policy, overdue payment policy etc.

In terms of format, layout, and appearance, invoices generally follow standard invoice format with a heading "invoice". In this part, the company's logo or slogan can also be included if required. Moreover, information about the buyer and the seller is involved following the heading part. The amount of goods or service is generally represented in the centre of the page by a table with necessary columns or rows. Some companies design their own forms, but there are also computer programs available which can generate specialized invoice forms through the use of templates. However, a professional invoice should contain detailed information on the goods or services, clear and accurate prices and current contact information for any billing questions a client may have. In a typical invoice text, it is noted that invoices generally include short expressions. It is observed that the following lexical items occur frequently in this genre type:

Table 3: Lexical Items related to Invoices

| General Information related to invoices | Des-cription of the goods/ service | Delivery of the products | Buyer/ Seller | Terms of Payment | Quality/ Quantity of Products | Value of the Pro-ducts |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Invoice number | Des-cription | Shipping Date | Sales Person | Letter of Credit Number | Total number of pa-ckages (kgs) | Total |
| Date of invoice | Order No | Shipping Terms | Bill To | Con-ditions of Sale and Terms of Payment | Total net weight (kgs) | Total Price |
| Reference number | Product des-cription | Shipper | Exporter Name and Address | Terms and Con-ditions of Sale | Total Gross Weight (kgs) | Sub Total |
| Tariff Classification Number | Item number | Ship To | Exporter Name and Address | Currency | Quantity | Total Invoiced |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|------------|
| | | Date of Shipment | Ultimate Consignee Name and Address | | | Unit Price |
| | | Mode of Transportation | Sold To Name and Address | | | Amount Due |
| | | Air/ocean port of embarkation | Intermediate Consignee/ Consigned to | | | Total Due |
| | | Air/ocean port of unloading | Notify part Name and Address | | | Discount |
| | | Transportation Method (via.....from) | | | | Deposit |
| | | Country of Origin | | | | Credit |

Apart from these expressions, certain phrases such as “Thank you for your business!” and “Thank you for your custom” are included at the end of the invoices.

In terms of grammaticality, it is observed that invoices tend to be formal, and formulaic language is used. The writers of these text types use both active and passive constructions, such as “These commodities, technology, or software were exported from the United States in accordance with the Export Administration Regulations.”, and “This invoice is for export/import purposes only and not intended for payment purpose”. This example sentence structures also indicate that writers use present, past and future tenses when describing the nature of the goods or service. Overall, sentence structures in these invoices are rare. However, in order to provide descriptions of the products or service, statements such as “remove existing suite”, “fit new suite”, “film location selection and venu booking”, and “transport to and from the airport” are used. On the other hand; a variety of prepositions are used such as of, for, from, to, within, as, and via so as to express relationships, including time, location, means, quantity, or condition.

The genre of invoices tries to create a situation which outlines the cost of products or services. With regard to this, it can be said that there is a relationship between the buyer and seller. Hence, invoices provide a way for proving the features of that transaction. The writers of invoices present themselves as the authorized person who is responsible for the goods or services provided in return for certain amount of charge; whereas the reader is the person who gets the invoice for evidence for this contact. Moreover, the writer justifies the term of payment through invoices in which the customers can have a written document for the amount of payment and conditions. For this reason, it is obvious that invoices create an objective scene for the parties involved in which evidence for transaction is displayed directly to the customers.

Suggested Sample Writing Course for Students Specialized in Accounting

Based on Osman's (2004) approach in relation to Genre-Corpus-Based Instruction, the following sample writing course can be suggested:

Table 4: Stages of a Sample Writing Course

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Stage 1 | -Making learners build knowledge of field(C) -Providing learners with types of the target genre(P) |
| Stage 2 | -Guiding learners to explore the genre(C) -Making learners analyze structural patterns of the genre(P) |
| Stage 3 | -Guiding learners how to draft, revise and edit the genre type(C) -Providing learners with practice to construct the genre(P) |
| Stage 4 | - Guiding learners to be conscious users of the discourse of the specialist culture (C) -Providing the learners to independently construct the genre(P) |

Proficiency of the Learners: Pre-Intermediate
Number of students: 20 students (one class)
Time / Duration: 3 hours a week/ one semester
Aim and objectives:

1. The general aim of this course is to guide students to learn the structure and language features of different texts of invoices in English. It is assumed that learners donot know how to analyze this type of genre in the target language. For this reason, different types of invoices will be used throughout the course sessions.
2. After the course, the students will be able to:
Comprehend the use of each genre.

- Know the organizational structure and linguistic features;
- Be able to tell the content and purpose of the texts
- Be able to organize invoices, using comparatively appropriate language;
- Develop specific writing skills in terms of writing invoices

This suggested course can be designed for young adults aged between 20-25, who are learning English as a foreign language. They are able to recognize genres related to their field in their native language. However, what is important for them is to analyze this kind of genre in English, as they may need to deal with invoices in the target language for their professions in the future.

Depending upon these; the following schedule for GBI can be suggested:

Table 5: The Schedule for GBI

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Week 1 | |
| Stage 1 | -Activating learners' prior knowledge about this genre in their native language -Discussing the genre |
| Week 2 | |
| | -Introducing the target genre in English -Identifying the types of the genre |
| Week 3 | |
| | -Discussing more types of the genre -Distinguishing the contents of invoices |
| Week 4 | |
| Stage 2 | -Identifying organization and linguistic features of the genre -Identifying social function of the genre |
| Week 5 | |
| | -Comparing the English genre with its counterpart in terms of social function, structural organization and linguistic features |
| Week 6 | |
| Stage 3 | -Practicing to construct the genre -Selecting the type of invoice |
| Week 7 | |
| | -Writing the first draft -Submitting the first draft |
| Week 8 | |
| | -Analyzing the comments of the lecturer related to first draft -Constructing the second draft |
| Week 9 | |
| | -Discussing the comments on the second draft -Designing an invoice with a proper organization, layout, etc. |
| Week 10 | |
| Stage 4 | -Constructing the genre -Discussing the final draft in terms of linguistic features, content, layout, etc. -Submitting the constructed genre. |

In week 1, a review of learners' prior knowledge related to the different text types of invoices are introduced so that learners are able to know what they will do. Sample invoices are brought to class, and they are asked to discuss different invoice types such as pro forma invoices, commercial invoices, service invoices written in their native language by asserting their communicative purpose and situational context in which they are used. In the second week of the course, the target genre is introduced in English, and different models of text types are brought to class to identify the differences among each other. In week 3, more samples are discussed in the class in order to provide the learners opportunity for identifying the content of each text type. In week 4 (Stage 2), they are asked to analyze linguistic patterns of invoices. They are asked to focus on the voice and tense used in invoices. Moreover, certain lexical items which frequently occur in those texts are introduced to the learners by expressing their definitions and giving detailed information about the context they are used. Apart from this, learners examine the social function of this genre, and they are asked to discuss when and how this genre type are used, and will be used by them in their workplace. In week 5, learners are asked to compare samples of English genre with its counterpart in Turkish. They are asked to find similarities and differences between these texts so that they can differentiate the ones used in different contexts (i.e. international settings).

Stage 3 of GBI begins in week 6 and the following 3 weeks (until week 9), learners need to practice writing as many invoices as possible. As they have identified the lexicogrammatical features of the genre, they are asked to use the appropriate lexical items and grammatical features in the invoices. Meanwhile, the lecturer will give feedback for their drafts as for week 10 (Stage 4), they are expected to submit the final version of the invoice for constructing a text of the same genre independently.

Conclusion

In this study, it was aimed to demonstrate how to conduct genre analysis and thereby propose a writing course that can be used by ESP practitioners. For designing the writing course, GBI, which has recently been an effective approach for ESP learners, was employed. As it is mentioned above, invoice as a genre type were preferred as the instructional material and Osman's (2004) GBI procedure was followed in terms of designing the course. The study is assumed to be beneficial particularly for ESP learners who specialize in the field of Accounting or Marketing as they will probably use invoices in their workplaces. By being exposed to knowledge about the organizational structure and communicative functions of the genre type, they can gain awareness and develop their writing skills in ESP settings.

Although the current study is solely based on suggesting a writing course for ESP learners, in order to have profound results, it is recommended to implement and observe the impact of the effectiveness of the course on the development of writing skill of the learners for further studies.

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