

Genre Analysis in Linguistics Argumentative Essays¹

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ABSTRACT

It is possible to approach genre analysis from a variety of angles and academic fields, including literary studies, linguistics, cultural studies, and media studies. Finding the characteristic components and patterns of a genre, such as its narrative frameworks, character types, locales, themes, and aesthetic techniques, is a necessary step. Researchers can learn more about a genre's function, target audience, and cultural setting by looking at these characteristics. The writing skill is being taught in the Departments of English for eight courses, but the students' level in writing is not efficient. The aim of this study is to reveal the role of genre analysis in improving students' argumentative essays performance. The participants are 40 male and female students from 2nd grade from the Department of English, College of Education for Humanities, University of Anbar. A genre analysis-based-argumentative essays writing program was prepared to achieve the aim of the study. An achievement test was designed to collect the data. The result revealed that the use of genre analysis has a significance and positive role on students' argumentative essays writing. This result is due that genre analysis approach has facilitated the argumentative essays writing, the students have practiced a new genre-based approach in learning writing argumentative essay. The participants of the experimental group have gain high marks in argumentative essay writing due to the fact that genre analysis helps students understand the rhetorical strategies used in argumentative essays, focusing on evidence, logical reasoning, and persuasive language. To conclude, genre analysis is a crucial and positive tool in teaching argumentative essay writing, significantly enhancing students' performance. By understanding the characteristics and expectations of the argumentative genre, students are equipped with the necessary tools to effectively convey their ideas and persuade their readers.

Keywords: *Genre analysis; genre linguistics; argumentative essays.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching argumentative essays to university students who are learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is very important for their academic and personal growth. It helps students succeed in many parts of their lives. Teaching argumentative essays helps EFL students think critically and analyze information better (Butler & Britt, 2011). These abilities help them to approach difficult problems from different angles, which helps them to better understand the subject and improve their problem-solving abilities (Alarcon & Morales, 2011). In addition, learning how to write argumentative essays helps English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to effectively and confidently share their thoughts. Learning this skill helps students feel more self-assured when they join debates, have important conversations, and stand up for their own ideas and beliefs. Furthermore, instructing students in argumentative essays helps them develop their language abilities and ability to effectively communicate. This helps students to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively in different situations (Seyoum, et al., 2022). Nagao (2018) presented Discussion Essay Genre (DEG) which is also known as the "argumentative essay. A discussion/ argumentative essay presents various opinions on a specific issue, with a typical structure consisting of the first paragraph addressing the topic, followed by arguments for and against the major issue in the second and third paragraphs, and the final paragraph expressing the writer's opinion. The writer must use appropriate language features to clarify their meaning, including experiential, verbal, and mental verbs, modal verbs, adverbs, and contrastive conjunctions. These elements help convey material, emotional, and mental processes, ensuring clarity and understanding in the essay.

Statement of the Problem

The system of education in Iraq is a bottom-up system in learning English language where the learners are expected to learn English grammar, language functions, and vocabulary. Thus to study any language skill, the teacher (instructors) need to use specific strategies in teaching each skill. Students in the English language departments study the four skills, and according to the classroom environment and the technological capabilities available in the English language departments, we see that some skills have a greater share in teaching than others, and therefore the role of the university professor is to monitor the level of students and conduct an assessment and evaluation of their level in the four language skills. For the purpose of knowing the competencies and needs of students to develop a specific

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language skill, the researcher asked the students of the second grade of the Department of English about the skill they most want to develop? Most of the answers were the students' desire to develop writing skills. Based on the students' answers, another question was asked, "What kind of writing would you like to develop?" Most of the answers were to develop the skill of essay writing and composition. Previous literature has been reviewed Li (2010); Imtiaz & Mahmood (2014); Qin & Uccelli (2016); Nagao (2018); Ahmad (2019); Ariyanfar & Mitchell (2020); and Seyoum, et al. (2022) emphasized the usefulness and the significant role of genre analysis in developing students' argumentative essays performance. as an attempt to meet students' needs, an instructional program based on genre analysis linguistic argumentative essay was designed. Researchers recognize the benefits of process-genre approaches in teaching writing in foreign language genres, but empirical studies on EFL learners' performance are underrepresented (Huang, et al, 2020). This study investigates the effects of argumentative writing on EFL students' argumentative essay writing improvement.

The Aim

This study aims to reveal the role of genre analysis in role of genre analysis in improving EFL male and female students' argumentative essays performance.

The Hypothesis

To achieve the aim of the study, the following hypothesis has been set "There is a significant difference at $\alpha=0.05$ between the mean scores of the students in the experimental group and the students' mean scores in the experimental group that attributed to the teaching methods".

The Significance

Genre analysis enhances students' understanding of argumentative essays' features and structure, improving writing skills and persuasive communication through replicating genre conventions.

The Limits

This study is limited to the following:

- 1- Location: The study was conducted at the Department of English, University of Anbar, Ramadi, Iraq.
- 2- Sample: The participants were 40 male and female students from 2nd grade at the department of English.
- 3- Instrument: A genre analysis-based-argumentative essays writing program was prepared. Its' validity and reliability were calculated.

Literature Review

Genre is crucial for research in writing aspects and pedagogical applications in various educational fields, providing a valuable framework for teaching and learning (Imtiaz & Mahmood, 2014). Genre is a classification system for artistic, literary, and literary works, based on conventions, themes, styles, and structures. Genres exist in various media, including literature, film, music, theater, and visual arts. Genre analysis examines genres to understand their features, conventions, and functions, analyzing patterns and characteristics in texts to understand their overall meaning and reception (Wang & Ge, 2022).

Nagao (2019) reached some implication of the genre-based approach to writing in EFL contexts which can improve writing skills, linguistic competence, critical thinking, transferable skills, and cultural awareness. By teaching students the conventions and features of different genres, they can produce coherent and effective pieces of writing. This exposure expands their linguistic repertoire and helps them develop a better understanding of language functions in different contexts. Additionally, it fosters intercultural competence, enabling students to write for different audiences and contexts, both within and beyond their own cultural boundaries.

Recently, the genre-based approach has been implemented in the middle east, Ariyanfar & Mitchell (2020) found that the genre-based approach in Iran has the potential to enhance writing skills, contextual relevance, genre awareness, pedagogical strategies, teacher training, and transferability. By focusing on specific features and structures of different genres, students develop better communication and expression skills. This approach is relevant to Iranian students and their academic and professional contexts, allowing teachers to develop the necessary skills for success in their specific environments. Additionally, the approach can be applied to other educational contexts beyond Iran, promoting effective communication and enhancing students' writing abilities.

The genre-based approach in teaching writing aims to improve students' writing skills and language proficiency by recognizing that writing is a social activity that requires understanding and adherence to specific genres (Lam &

Crosthwaite, 2018). By teaching students about persuasive essays, narratives, and scientific reports, educators empower them to communicate effectively within specific contexts (Aull, 2019). The approach also acknowledges that writing is a complex cognitive process that involves mastering grammar, vocabulary, and structuring ideas coherently. By focusing on genre-specific features like organization, language patterns, and rhetorical devices, students develop a deeper understanding of different texts, enabling them to produce more coherent and engaging pieces of writing (Lotfi, 2019). The genre-based approach fosters student engagement and motivation by providing authentic writing experiences, encouraging collaborative learning and peer feedback. By focusing on genre-specific conventions, authentic writing experiences, and collaborative learning, the genre-based approach cultivates language proficiency, critical thinking abilities, and overall motivation to become proficient writers (Mitchell & Pessoa, 2017).

Adopting genre analysis is not an easy task for EFL students, they face some challenges, Pessoa, et al, (2017) inferred that a functional approach to analyzing student challenges in the argument genre can provide valuable insights into underlying issues and develop effective strategies to address them. This approach emphasizes the purpose and communicative function of language, focusing on how language is used in specific contexts. It helps students identify gaps in reasoning, improve organization, and assess language choices to enhance their argumentative skills. It also helps students adapt their arguments to suit different audiences by analyzing their beliefs, values, and knowledge. The functional approach can also help students select appropriate evidence, analyze counterarguments and rebuttals, and use meta-discourse and rhetorical devices strategically. By addressing these challenges, educators can provide targeted instruction to enhance students' argumentative skills and empower them to become more effective communicators capable of constructing well-reasoned and persuasive arguments in various contexts.

An effective evaluation framework for analyzing argumentative essays as an academic genre ought to take into consideration some elements such as argumentation, structure, writing quality, critical thinking, and research integration. By evaluating these aspects, instructors and evaluators can provide meaningful feedback to help students improve their argumentative writing skills. Trinh & Truc (2014), Ahmad (2019), and Aull (2019) reached that the genre assessment framework for argumentative essays should consider the essay's argumentation, structure, writing quality, critical thinking, and research and referencing. The framework should evaluate the essay's strength, persuasiveness, clarity, organization, and overall quality of writing. It should also assess the thesis statement, supporting evidence, and logical coherence of the arguments. The essay should demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic, provide well-reasoned arguments, and effectively address and refute counterarguments. The framework should also assess the essay's writing quality, including grammar, vocabulary, and style. Critical thinking skills should be assessed, including the ability to present a balanced view, consider alternative perspectives, and critically evaluate evidence and assumptions. Research and referencing should be considered, ensuring the essay's ability to strengthen arguments and demonstrate a broader understanding of the topic.

Previous Studies

Amogne (2013) examined the improvement of EFL students' argumentative essay writing skills by exposing them to genre-based writing practice with their writing teacher. Despite facing challenges in critiquing opposition views, students showed progress in identifying lexico-grammatical features and overall rhetorical structure. The positive reaction towards the approach was evident, and post-intervention drafts showed significant improvements. The article suggests that a genre-based approach in writing allows students to control linguistic features for communicative purposes and develop their writing skills more easily. This approach has implications for teaching writing in EFL contexts and calls for its use in classroom settings.

Imtiaz & Mahmood (2014) analyzed thirty-three argumentative essays by Pakistani college and university students at ICLE using Hylland's model. The corpus-based study uses Ant Mover software and human coders to identify and code the moves. Results show most essays follow the three stages and include obligatory moves. The findings have pedagogical implications for teaching and learning ESP/EFL, providing teachers with better information to improve their teaching approach and academic writing materials.

Nagao (2018) investigated a study at a Japanese university found that 14 foreign-language writers improved their genre awareness of discussion genre texts, particularly argumentative essays, through a 15-week systemic functional linguistics course. The study used pre- and post-surveys and self-reflection written texts to analyze the students' understanding of generic structure and lexico-grammar. The results showed that students' comprehension of second and third paragraphs of the target genre text improved, and increased understanding of lexico-grammatical features was related to their self-efficacy and confidence in their writing skills. The study suggests that a teaching and learning cycle and genre-based approach to writing instruction can enhance EFL students' awareness of generic structure and interpersonal meaning in argumentative essays.

Aull (2019) examined stance marker use in persuasive argumentative and analytic explanatory writing genres in higher education. Corpus linguistic analysis of late-undergraduate and early-graduate-level writing in the Michigan Corpus of Upper-Level Student Papers (MICUSP) reveals two persistent stance expectations and significant distinctions between argumentative and explanatory writing. The findings suggest important considerations for instruction, assignment design, and future research.

Huang, et al. (2020) examined the impact of a process-genre approach on L2 learners' writing improvement in argumentative writing. The experimental group received instruction through the process-genre approach, while the control group received conventional instruction. Results showed significant increases in the intervention group's performance in the immediate posttest and retained these effects 6 weeks later. The treatment group outperformed the comparison group in both the immediate and delayed posttests, particularly in content and organization.

Methodology

In this section the researcher presented the participants, the instructional program, the instrument, and the procedures,.

The Participants

The population of the study is 207 EFL students from second grade, Departments of English, College of Education for Humanities, University of Anbar. The participants are 40 EFL male and female students (who represent 20% of the population) from 2nd grades who were chosen randomly and divided into two groups, namely the experimental and control group. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants.

Table 1: 2nd Grade Students Distribution

Group	Males	Females	Total
Experimental	9	11	20
Control	8	12	20
Total	17	23	40

The Instrument

To achieve the aim and to verify the hypothesis of the study, a genre analysis-based-argumentative essays writing program was prepared. also, a post achievement test was designed.

The Implementation of the Instructional Program

To implement the instructional program the researcher conducted the following steps:

- 1- Introduce the Genre: the researcher started by introducing and explaining the concept of genre to the 2nd grade EFL students. Explain that genres are specific types of texts that have certain characteristics and purposes. Providing examples of different genres, such as narrative, descriptive, and argumentative essays.
- 2- Genre Analysis: The focus is on the genre of argumentative essays and analyse its main components. After that, breaking down the structure of an argumentative essay, including the introduction (essay statement, background information), body paragraphs (claims, evidence, counterarguments), and conclusion (restatement of essay, summary of main points).
- 3- Language Features: explain the language features which are commonly used in the argumentative essays. Including persuasive vocabulary, transition words and phrases, formal tone, and the use of evidence and examples to support arguments. Also, presenting some examples of argumentative essays, then analysing sample essays and identify these language features.
- 4- Textual Patterns: Presenting the patterns and strategies that used in argumentative essays. This included the use of logical reasoning, the presentation of counterarguments and rebuttals, and the overall coherence and cohesion of the essay. Help students to identify these patterns and understand how they contribute to the effectiveness of an argumentative essay.
- 5- Guided Practice: Providing students with guided practice activities where they can apply their understanding of genre analysis. Giving them sample argumentative essay topics and have them outline and write their own essays, following the genre conventions and incorporating the language features and textual patterns they have learned.
- 6- Peer Review and Feedback: Encourage students to review and provide feedback on each other's essays. Focus on the genre-specific aspects, such as the clarity of the essay statement, the strength of the arguments, and the organization of ideas. This allows students to apply their genre analysis skills in evaluating and improving their own writing and that of their peers.

Post Achievement Test

The post-test has been designed to collect the data of the study. the test consisted of three topics; the students choose two topics to write an argumentative essay. Following is the test question "Write argumentative essays on two of the following topics: (Each topic is allotted 50 marks).

- 1) Should the use of cell phones be allowed in classrooms?
- 2) Appraised home-schooling and traditional schooling.
- 3) Is the legalization of social media applications beneficial for society?

Validity and Reliability***The Validity of the instructional program:***

Content validity in a genre analysis-based argumentative essay writing program is crucial to ensure it effectively covers the necessary content and skills. A jury of experts in English language teaching methods and applied linguistics suggested several modifications, including aligning with learning objectives, providing comprehensive coverage of key elements, and providing a scaffolded learning experience. The program should ensure learners understand and master each stage before moving to more complex aspects of genre analysis and argumentative essay writing.

The Validity of the Posttest

The face validity has been exposed to a jury of specialists in the field of English language teaching methods and applied linguistics. All the jury member agree that the topics are suitable for the students' language level and background. The jury member omit some topics related to medicine, animal, and transport and modify the remain three topics. The topics reduced from six topics to three topics.

The reliability of the posttest was calculated by using measured and re-measured (after two weeks). The pilot sample consisted of 12 students. The results of analyzing pilot sample, the total time to answer the test is between 45 to 55 minutes, also the topics are very clear. The total reliability score was 0.88 which is consider acceptable.

Procedures

To verify the hypothesis and achieve the aim, the following procedures were conducted:

1. An open question was distributed via Google Forms to the participants to reveal the skill that they needed to develop.
2. The responses were analysed, revealing that they needed to develop writing skills, especially for writing argumentative essays.
3. Selecting the participants. The students from 2nd grade were chosen because they study essay writing subject in the first and the second semester.
4. The participants were chosen randomly, and divided into two groups.
5. The participants in the experimental group were taught essays via a genre analysis-based-argumentative essays writing program. While the participants in the control group were taught essays via the prescribed methods.
6. The literature review and the empirical related studies were reviewed.
7. The teaching approach was determined by selecting a genre analysis linguistics approach , and the measurement tool (post-test) was designed.
8. A genre analysis-based-argumentative essays writing program was prepared, its validity and reliability were verified.
9. The post-test scoring scheme was built. Table 2 shows the result.
10. The pilot test was done on the pilot sample.
11. During the instructional programme, the students in the experimental group were exposed to formative assessments.
12. The control and experimental groups set for the post-test; The responses were statistically analysed.

Table 2. Scoring rubrics scheme of the post achievement test

Criteria	Scoring
Thesis Statement and Argument Development	1-5
Organization and Structure	1-5
Evidence and Support	1-5
Counterarguments and Refutation	1-5
Analysis and Interpretation	1-5
Language and Style: the clarity, coherence, and effectiveness of the language and writing style used in the essay.	1-5
Conclusion: the summary of the main points and reinforcing the argument.	1-5
Overall Cohesion and Cohesiveness.	1-5
Originality and Critical Thinking.	1-5
Presentation and Formatting	1-5
Total	50

RESULTS

Results for the Hypothesis

To verify the hypothesis, "There is a statistically significant difference at $\alpha=0.05$ between the mean scores of the students in the experimental group and that of the students' mean scores in the experimental group that attributed to the teaching methods", mean scores, standard deviations, and t-values of the two groups were used to calculate the results of the post-test, Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3: The Mean, Standard Deviations, and t-values of the Two Groups.

Group	No.	Mean	SD	T-values		df	Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated		
EG.	20	59.53	8.62	3.39	2.000	38	0.05
CG.	20	52.64	6.58				

Table 3 shows that the mean scores of the experimental group's participants are 59.53 and the control group's participants are 52.58, respectively. The calculated *t*-value is 3.39 is higher than the tabulated *t*-value which is 2.000, this means that there is a significant difference between the two groups in favour of the experimental group. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULT

The result revealed that the use of genre analysis has a significance and positive effect on students' argumentative essays writing, and it plays a positive role in enhancing students' argumentative essays writing performance. This result is due that genre analysis approach has facilitated the argumentative essays writing, the students have practiced a new genre-based approach in learning writing argumentative essay, Chomsky has emphasized that effective communication and clear expression of ideas. Developing and refining one's writing skills can contribute to more articulate and persuasive communication, which aligns with Chomsky's broader concerns about the power and influence of language.

The result revealed that genre analysis is essential for improving students' argumentative essay writing performance by understanding the conventions and expectations associated with this genre. By examining key features, structures,

and language patterns, students can identify unique demands like developing a clear thesis statement, providing logical reasoning, and countering opposing viewpoints. This understanding helps construct coherent and persuasive arguments that align with audience expectations, ultimately leading to improved writing performance.

The participants of the experimental group have gain high marks in argumentative essay writing due to the fact that genre analysis helps students understand the rhetorical strategies used in argumentative essays, focusing on evidence, logical reasoning, and persuasive language. This knowledge helps students make deliberate choices in selecting and organizing evidence, structuring arguments, and using persuasive language, ultimately improving their persuasive essay impact and overall writing performance.

Finally, the positive role of genre analysis linguistics approach in improving EFL students' argumentative essay writing is that it is crucial for students in argumentative writing, as it helps them develop a deeper understanding of their target audience's expectations, knowledge, and biases. By identifying the typical audience, such as academic instructors, fellow students, or general readers, students can tailor their arguments to address their specific needs and perspectives. This alignment between writer's goals and reader expectations fosters effective communication and increases the likelihood of achieving desired impact in their argumentative essays. Genre analysis positively impacts students' writing performance by cultivating audience-focused writing skills.

It is worth to mention that the result of the study is consistent with the results of the studies of Amogne (2013), Imtiaz & Mahmood (2014), Nagao (2018), Aull (2019), and Huang, et al. (2020) who found that using genre analysis approach in teaching writing essay in general and argumentative essays have positive and significant role in improving, enhancing, and developing students writing performance.

CONCLUSION

Genre analysis is a crucial and positive tool in teaching argumentative essay writing, significantly enhancing students' performance. By understanding the characteristics and expectations of the argumentative genre, students are equipped with the necessary tools to effectively convey their ideas and persuade their readers. Genre analysis provides a framework for organizing thoughts and structuring arguments coherently, enabling students to present their ideas logically and persuasively. It also helps students develop a clear understanding of audience awareness, allowing them to adapt their writing style and tone to suit the expectations and preferences of their intended readers. Genre analysis exposes students to various argumentative essay samples from different disciplines, topics, and perspectives, broadening their horizons and encouraging critical thinking. Students learn to recognize various rhetorical devices and strategies employed by successful writers, enabling them to incorporate these techniques into their own writing and strengthen their arguments. Genre analysis fosters confidence and competence in students, allowing them to express their viewpoints and engage in academic discourse. By incorporating genre analysis into the curriculum, educators can enhance students' writing abilities and equip them with valuable lifelong skills in critical thinking, communication, and persuasion.

Data Availability

The dataset used and/or analysed during the current study would be available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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