

## A GENRE-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING NEW ENGLISH 10

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**Abstract.** On 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, Vietnam National Assembly issued the decision N88/2014/QH13 regarding “Curriculum and Textbook Comprehensive national education innovation Project”. Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training decided to bring in a new curriculum in all subject areas, including English. This curriculum was known as competence-based curriculum. In English language teaching and learning area, Genre-based pedagogy informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, which sees communicative competence as involving the mastery of different types of texts, is potential approach to be applied for the new textbooks and curriculum. In this article, procedures for teaching the exposition genre (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin, 2009; Martin & Rose, 2008), which accounts for the highest proportion of all the genres in New English 10, was proposed with an aim to improve students’ writing through reading.

**Keywords:** Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), genre-based approach, textbooks, curriculum, reading, writing.

### 1. Introduction

The genre-based instruction has proved very effective in improving students’ English language learning efficiency and to stimulate the initiatives of both teachers and students, but it has not been received much attention in Vietnam. For learners, genre can be a framework, or scaffolding for the production of meaningful passages in specific context. It is also useful tool for teachers, who are expected to give practical and constructive guidelines to students. In this article, I intend to introduce a new way to integrate the teaching of reading and writing using genre-based pedagogy, which is illustrated by Unit 8 in New English 10.

### 2. Content

#### 2.1. Genre-based approach in English language teaching

There are currently three main approaches to genre analysis in in the area of language teaching and learning; the New Rhetoric School, ESP School (English for Specific Purposes School) and The Genre theory of the Sydney School. In the New Rhetoric tradition, the focus is on the linguistics features of the genre (e.g., Bhatia, 1993). In the English for Specific Purposes tradition, the social purpose of the genre is the focus (e.g., Miller, 1984). The Genre theory of the Sydney School brought together the linguistics features (i.e., lexico-grammar), the social, and cultural context in which the genre occurs (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, Martin, 2009, Martin & Rose, 2008). In combining the strength of the New Rhetoric and the English for Specific

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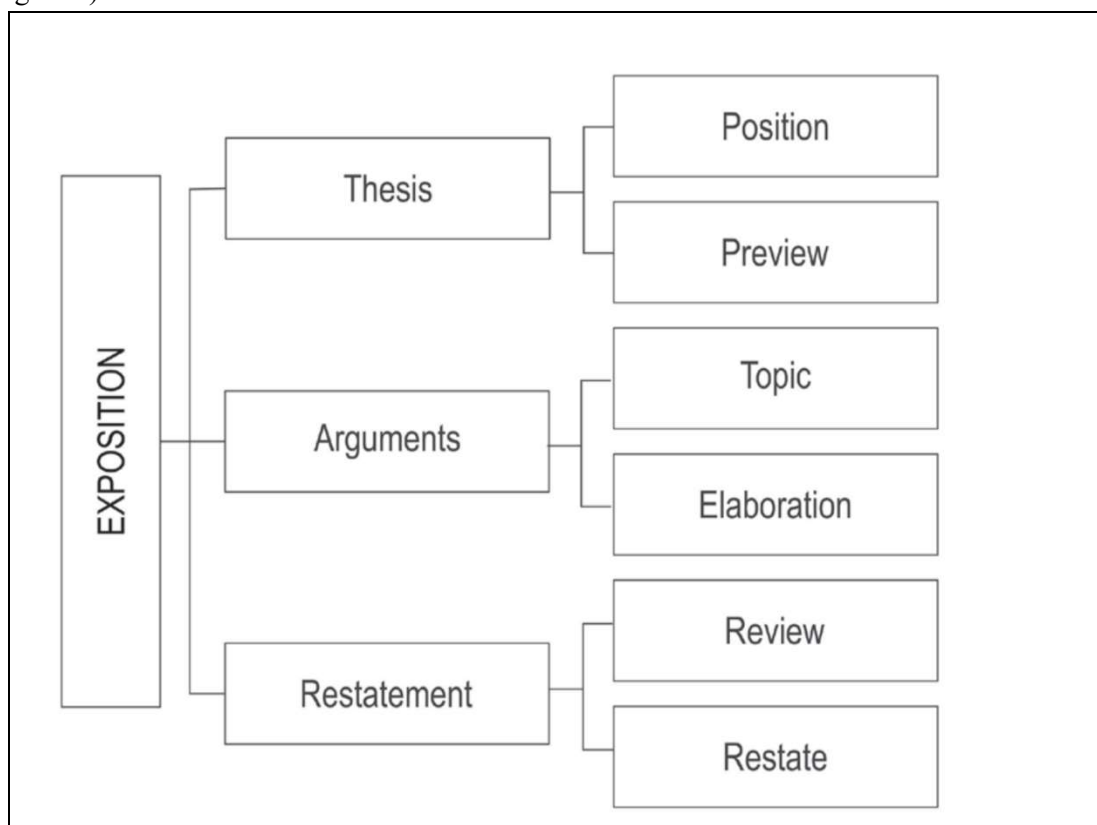
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Purposes approaches, the SFL genre-based approach can be particularly useful in informing EFL writing instruction. This approach has received increased attention in the last 20 years (Brisk, 2015; Hyland, 2007; Hyon, 1996; Paltridge, 1996, 2001) as genre-based approaches have focused on functional language, i.e., the language that occurs in particular social-cultural contexts; therefore, people fulfil certain functions such as entertaining or persuading people by using particular genres like recounts, narratives and expositions, to name a few.

According to Martin and Rose (2007) and Rose and Martin (2012), an argumentation is subdivided into two main genres: exposition and discussion. The first type, exposition, corresponds to arguing from one point of view while the second one, discussion, occurs when “two or more points of views are presented and one argued for over the other” (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 12).

For this study, I will focus on the genre of exposition described by Rose and Martin (2012). The stages of the genres were classified into Thesis, Argument and Restatement (Summarized in Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Genre of exposition (Adapted From Rose & Martin, 2012)**

Figure 1 shows the schematic structure of the genre of exposition. This genre is organized into three main stages that represent the flow of information in the development of arguments. These stages sub-divided into different stages to make the text coherent. Students need to consider these stages because they form the basis for developing this genre coherently.

In EFL settings, considering Rose and Martin (2012) three stages of genre-based approach can be identified:

The first stage is the *deconstruction phase*. In this stage, reading about the topic is used in the classroom in order to “build the field for subsequent writing as well as providing models for persuasive writing” (Rose and Martin, 2012, p. 201). Students are invited to identify key

elements, the lexico-grammar patterns, and so on. Following this stage, students are asked to focus on aspects that make up discourse in the text. Learners have to analyze the lexico-grammatical aspects within the text so as to get resources to make meaning as text.

The second stage is the *joint construction*. In this stage, the teacher needs to support the students' development of their ideas in order to motivate them to write the texts in groups. Students are elicited to participate in joint construction and give their opinions about the aspects of the genre being constructed.

The third stage is the *individual construction*. In this stage, the students start the development of their own texts.

## **2.2. A proposed genre-based lesson plan**

This lesson plan proposes a model lesson plan for teaching how to write an exposition in Unit 8 – New English 10 as followed:

1. Developing learning objectives
2. Setting the stage
3. Providing linguistics input
4. Providing activities in Deconstruction stage
5. Providing activities in Joint construction stage
6. Providing activities in Independent construction stage

### **2.2.1. Developing learning objectives:**

Learning objectives: By the end of this lesson, learners are expected to be able to:

- Identify the structure of an exposition;
- Identify the stages in an exposition and analyze variations (if any);
- Identify the meaning of vocabulary items and phrases used in the exposition;
- Jointly and then individually deconstruct the exposition
- Jointly and then independently construct appropriate exposition, highlighting the structural elements.

### **2.2.2. Setting the stage:**

At this stage, the teacher will:

- review some key vocabulary and grammatical structures that students have learnt before. For example, in this Unit, an exposition written to argue for the advantages of using electronic devices in learning may require the teacher to review related words and phrases such as smart phones, laptops, tablets, record the phone calls, take notes, etc. before introducing the sample exposition.
- use the text in Reading section as a model and ask the learners to identify the overall structure, and
- state the topic of the lesson and its objectives in clear and simple language.

### **2.2.3. Providing linguistics input:**

At this stage, the teacher will:

- give out the text in Reading section as a reading comprehension task,
- ask the students general questions and check their understanding of the text followed by specific question in Exercise 4 on details,
- ask the students to discuss their answers with their classmates, and come up with final answers to the comprehension questions, and
- give out a worksheet to the learners and ask them to reread the text and identify its key contextual features. These are provided in Table (1) below:

**Table 1. Contextual and discursal features in an exposition**  
(Adapted from Humphrey, S., Droga, L., & Feez, S, 2012)

Aspect	Text
The purpose of the text	
Key moves in the text	
Key vocabulary and structures: a. Language for expressing ideas: - range of process types (verb group) ✓ relating to identify phenomena, present reasons and explain causes and sequences. ✓ action (typically in the present tense) to provide examples of causes and consequences ✓ some sensing to make explicit personal opinion - general, abstract, technical participants (expressed as extended noun groups) as evidence b. Language for connecting ideas: - complex sentences and simple sentences (including embedded clauses) - logical connections of cause and effect (relating verbs, connectives, dependent clauses) c. Language for interaction: - evaluative vocabulary, especially judgment and appreciation - rhetorical resources for acknowledging and rebutting alternative positions (eg concession, modality and attribution) - interpersonal metaphor used to express opinion in a less straightforward, implicit way (eg it is clear that ...) d. Language for creating cohesive texts: - text and paragraph openers and some text connectives to signal where the text is headed - zig-zag theme patterns to connect and elaborate on ideas from previous sentences - passive voice to foreground the object undergoing the process - nominalization to summarize events and name abstract phenomena	

**2.2.4. Providing activities in Deconstruction stage:**

Once the students have enough understanding about the exposition genre, the teacher starts to guide the students in the deconstruction of the text in the textbook. This involves mainly teacher-led discussion and reading activities related to this genre, which is to enable the students to develop habits of reading with the awareness of genres. While reading, the students should all the time keep the concept of genre foremost in their minds. The whole class activities may include:

**Textual organization:**

The teacher will present the reading text about New Ways to Learn English and divide it into discourse segments (Appendix 1). These segments will be scrambled. In groups, the learners will attempt to discover the correct sequence of stages and phases in it,

**Color-coding:**

In this activity, they will be given labels as thesis, argument, topic, elaboration, restatement.

They will be asked to code the discourse segments with these colored labels.

**Information gap/ Jigsaw:**

In this activity, the class will be divided into groups of three to five. In each group, each student will have a different element of the exposition. They are required to ask and answer questions about the parts that each one has. Then, they are asked to figure out the right sequence of the stages in the text.

**Text creation:**

In this activity, the learners are given the Table 2 below that provides text creation guidelines:

**Table 2. Guidelines for text creation**

The purpose of the text	Exposition
Context	Argue for the advantages of using new applications in learning English
Key stages and phases in the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis</li> <li>• Argument 1:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Topic</li> <li>✓ Elaboration</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Argument 2:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Topic</li> <li>✓ Elaboration</li> </ul> </li> <li>...</li> <li>• Restatement</li> </ul>
Key vocabulary, phases and expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluative languages: Positive: help improve, help promote, offer, benefit (from), great, wonderful, perfect, easily downloaded, useful, modern, excellent learning tools, understand material, widen your knowledge.</li> <li>• Modal verbs: Express the writer’s attitude to the topic: can, may.</li> </ul>

**2.2.5. Providing activities in Joint construction stage:**

At this stage, learners are asked to:

- present their analysis of the text in Writing section, given the steps they learnt. They are also asked how similar or different this exposition is from the one they studied in Reading section.
- present their analysis given the worksheet provided. They are also asked to color code the rhetorical stages in this exposition.

**2.2.6. Providing activities in Independent construction stage:**

At this stage, learners are asked to:

- work individually to write a short text about the advantages of using electronic devices in learning using prompts in Exercise 2 and their own ideas.

### 3. Conclusion

This genre-based lesson can be modeled for teaching other genres in English as a foreign language in Vietnam. It is worthy that this lesson plan integrate reading and writing. Through pedagogical activities, students are aware of the genre structure and then learn about lexical and grammatical features of the genre which can be used in their writing afterward. Further research on the effects of this method on students' improvement in learning should be conducted.

As an important implication of this approach regarding teacher education is that the application of this method will require teacher trainers to unpack different genres by analyzing how they work. Teacher understanding of how different genres work will support shifting the foreign language teaching paradigm from highlighting grammar that is decontextualized from the sociocultural context to teaching language in relation to the sociocultural and purposeful context in which they occurs.

It is hoped that this study is of great help for teachers teaching new textbooks to structure their lesson and perhaps most importantly teachers should be able to adapt the tasks into a genre-based lesson format for students' improvement in their reading and writing.

#### APPENDIX

Thesis	In the age of technology, you can take advantage of <b>new applications</b> which are very <b>useful for learning English</b> .
Argument 1	Topic: One way is to download free digital lessons and put them in your media player or other similar mobile devices. Elaboration: Then you can listen and study anywhere because these devices are portable.
Argument 2	Topic: Many devices offer apps which use voice recognition technology. Elaboration: This technology allows the use of speaking electronic dictionaries. You can see words on the screen and hear them spoken. Other devices may have word lists, exercises, tests and games.
Argument 3	Topic: There is also software that can help improve your pronunciation. Elaboration: You can choose to practice with different native English speakers. Some English learning software offers a choice of accents and genders of the speakers. This software can be used with different kinds of media players.
Argument 4	Topic: Many electronic mobile devices can work as recorders or cameras. Elaboration: They can be used to record real-life English speech, lessons, songs or English language films from television or the Internet. This is also an excellent way to learn English because these recordings can be used again and again.
Restatement	New technology opens new ways to learn. Choose a device that suits your learning style. This will make learning English easier, faster, and more effective and more enjoyable.

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