

Using Genre-based Writing Instruction to Teach the Writing of Literary Criticism

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ABSTRACT

Literary criticism requires students to interpret and critique a literary text using literary theories. This study examined the use of genre-based writing instruction to teach the writing of literary criticism to a group of first year undergraduate students. The genre approach used was based on the Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC) developed by Systemic Functional Linguistics scholars. Past studies have shown that there is a dearth of research studying the use of the genre approach in teaching writing for literature in the ESL context. This study was undertaken as an exploratory case study, using pre-post tests and interview as data collection methods. An analysis of respondents' essays revealed that they have improved in their ability to demonstrate all but a few of the rhetorical and linguistic conventions of a literary criticism. However, respondents who participated in the interview opined that they struggled in relating the exemplar studied during the deconstruction stage and felt that the writing instructor was too prescriptive in the joint-construction stage. Hence, the study revealed a need to hone students' mastery of the subject content and language use. Writing instructors need to cater to the needs of the learners in carrying out the TLC.

Keywords: genre-based; literary criticism; ESL; teaching writing; teaching literature

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a subject which requires students to read, understand and critique a piece of written work. In writing a literary criticism, students are expected to quote relevant evidences from the literary text, provide personal interpretation and critical argument, and apply literary theories to support their stand. Therefore, for undergraduate students, writing a literary criticism essay can be a daunting task, especially when the students have to grasp the subject content and at the same time, write within the discipline.

This study examined the effects of using a three-step genre-based writing instruction as described in Rothery and Stenglin (1995) to teach a group of Teaching of English as a second language (TESL) undergraduate students in the writing of literary criticism essays. Students were coached to acquire lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features of literary criticism before being asked to compose essays on their own. Lexico-grammatical conventions centre on the use of register, grammar and lexical properties in writing while rhetorical conventions focus on the means which a person is able to encourage or persuade others to understand things from another person's perspective (Burke, 1969).

Past studies have pointed out some of the possible concerns on the teaching of literature in Malaysia. The incorporation of literature into the English language teaching in Malaysia has recently resurfaced after it has diminished for a number of decades (Ganakumaran, 2003). A study conducted on the teaching of the literature component in English language syllabus in Malaysian secondary schools reveals the importance placed on comprehension and factual recall, rather than interpreting and offering opinions on the literary text. Teachers are also found to focus too much on preparing students to study for

exams (Hwang & Embi, 2007; Ismail, Abdul Aziz & Abdullah, 2008). Subsequently, Pillai (2010) laments that Malaysian university students face difficulties in reading and writing analytically and critically for their literature paper, especially in their use of English language for academic purposes. Ting et al. (2013) discovered that Malaysian undergraduates are encumbered by their poor competence in English language in producing academic essays. Therefore, it is likely that Malaysian ESL students struggle in learning literature, where there is a presence of literary content and at the same time, they have to grapple with the use of the English language itself.

In the context of this study, a group of undergraduate TESL students studying in a campus at the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education (ITE) were preparing themselves to undertake a literary theory and criticism paper for their Year 1 studies. This study was therefore, envisioned to address the possible needs of the students in learning useful skills and genre conventions to tackle the writing of literary criticism essays. The aims of this study are to determine whether the use of genre-based writing instruction assisted students to acquire the genre conventions of writing a literary criticism, and to what extent does the writing instruction improve students' writing of literary criticism. Another objective is to elicit the students' opinion on the Rothery and Stenglin's Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC), which is the genre-based writing instruction used in this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the early 90s, John Swales posited that a text which is used in a specific environment, be it academic writing, business or professional activity, would possess particular characteristics which distinguish itself from other texts (Swales, 1990). Bressler (2010) defines literary criticism as a disciplined exercise which seeks to describe, examine, justify, interpret and evaluate a work of literature. Studies conducted in the past two decades have established literary criticism as a genre in its own right, possessing its own rhetorical and lexicogrammatical features.

In literary criticism, the essays are mostly written with the writer being the knowing sage, who possesses the means to interpret and unlock the meaning of a literary text analysed (Hiltunen, 2006). Parry (1998) and Bruce (2010), who analysed academic essays written for three different disciplines, i.e. sociology, science and literature, observed that each discipline has their own distinctive rhetorical structures. For example, essays written for sociology have the moves of explanation and discussion; essays for science have the report and explanation move; while essays for literature are written following the structure of argument, explanation and recounting (narration) moves. These studies have pointed that essays written for literature display a particular rhetorical structure, thus differentiating themselves from the essays written for other disciplines.

When the lexicogrammatical features are concerned, Rizomilioti (2006) revealed that literary criticism texts on average use less hedging or downtoner words but use more affirmative seeking adverbials, such as 'undoubtedly'. The reason is as writing literary criticism also involves offering interpretation, writers would construct an argument and later, assert it to demonstrate the plausibility of his or her argument, as subjectivity in literature gives room to multiple, possible ways of interpretation (Beck & Jeffery, 2009). With regards to choice of words in presenting information and argument, Hiltunen (2006), who analysed academic writing in law, medicine and literature, discovered that verbs such as 'see' and 'reveal' are frequently used in writings of literature.

In applying the genre theory into pedagogy, one of the most used framework is the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) proposed by Rothery and Stenglin (1995) as shown in Figure 1. The model was developed and refined from literacy programmes carried out by

Australian primary and secondary school teachers. TLC was later successfully applied in the TESOL context, where the cycle was used to teach adult immigrants to read and write in English (Humphrey & Mcnaught, 2011). The TLC used in this study is rooted in the principles of scaffolding. In the classroom setting, the term scaffolding is used to describe the temporary assistance rendered by teachers to their students aimed at assisting them to execute a task or develop new understandings. As long as the learners remained focused on the learning tasks and knew the goals that are to be achieved, they can learn by observing the task being done by the expert partner (Cazden, 1996). The three-step approach in the TLC is an application of the scaffolding principles for the teaching of writing, where students are gradually eased into independent composition of literary criticism via observation and guided or joint writing sessions.

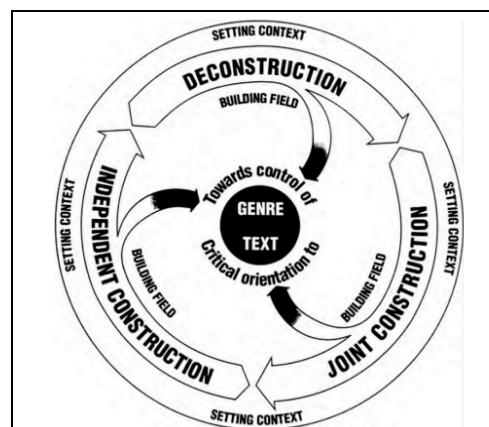


FIGURE 1. Rothery & Stenglin (1995)'s Teaching Learning Cycle

The model divides the genre based approach into three stages of deconstruction, joint construction and independent construction. Throughout the entire process, the instructor incorporates context setting and field building, in which learners are assisted to develop sensitivity to the use of language for the purpose and requirement of the genre. In deconstruction, students will engage in 'pulling apart a text to see how it works' (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). The students will be led to notice structures and linguistic features by first analyzing a good exemplar written for a literature class. This is to help students to develop genre awareness in writing a literary criticism. In joint negotiation, the instructor co-writes an identified academic writing with his or her students. Students' attention can be drawn to the use of hedging words, signposting, register and to the sequence in the presentation of arguments. Students will be given the support in the use of linguistic resources and writing skills by the instructor. This stage is where scaffolding is given to help students compose the genre (Humphrey & Mcnaught, 2011). Lastly, in independent construction, after the instructor is certain that students have shown a certain level of mastery and awareness of the target genre, students can be allowed to compose one on their own. At this stage, students can attempt to experiment with their use of language (Gebhard, 2010).

Research has highlighted that teachers who taught students to read and write via the teaching learning cycle have reported greater level of achievement among secondary and early-tertiary level students, particularly English language learners (Gebhard, 2010; Humphrey & Mcnaught, 2011). The genre approach, in general, has been proven to be an effective method to coach ESL/EFL students in writing a variety of composition, ranging from the introductory paragraph of a literature review (Bitchener & Turner, 2011), information and promotional texts for hospitality and tourism (Yang, 2012), to essays explaining procedures and steps (Ting et al., 2013). Closer to the context of this study, Wilder

and Wolfe (2009) examined the effect of providing explicit instruction on the rhetorical structure for first and second year undergraduates who undertake literature paper for the first time. They discovered that explicit instruction on the genre convention helps students to use the conventions taught and subsequently score high grades in their project paper. Students also reported as being more able to express their opinions on their texts and make connections between literary texts and their lives. Nonetheless, this study was conducted on native English user students. Hence, this study would attempt the study conducted by Wilder and Wolfe via an Asian; ESL perspective.

METHODOLOGY

The respondents for the study comprised 19 students from the first year Bachelor of Teaching (TESL) degree programme in an Institute of Teacher Education campus in Malaysia. All students were ethnic Chinese. Most of them possess average to good command of English language based on their 'O' Level English examination results. Prior to the commencement of this study, the students had completed a 3-semester preparatory programme, which included a study of a literature component oriented towards developing language proficiency. As this study is rather exploratory in nature, a qualitative approach to the research was used to elicit the data for the case study. Pre-post test and focus group interview were used as instruments to gather the data and to answer the research questions. A combination of research instruments allowed for a triangulation of the results and ensure a level of validity and reliability.

The case study was conducted with the researcher taking on the role as the writing instructor himself. The TLC was taught to the respondents as the genre-based writing instruction. A cycle of writing process for deconstruction, joint construction and independent construction was carried out. Throughout the writing instruction, students were tasked to write three literary criticism essays. The first one was written before the deconstruction stage was carried out, which constituted the pre-test. The second literary criticism essay was written during the independent construction stage, which became the first post test. The second post test, which was a delayed one, was conducted two months later via respondents' submission of their assignment. The assignment required them to write a literary criticism. The delayed post test tested on the retention of the rhetorical and the lexico-grammatical conventions taught. For the three essays that the students have written, they were required to apply the use of literary criticism to critique the themes in short stories.

In order to score students' achievement of genre conventions, a checklist has been created to list the rhetorical and linguistic conventions that were used in the pre, post and delayed post tests. The checklist was created by referring to assessment rubrics that are used to compose literary analyses and literary criticisms at undergraduate level (Hale, 1997; Kusch, 2009; Delaney, 2013). The checklist specified 11 rhetorical and 8 lexico-grammatical conventions which the respondents are to demonstrate a mastery on and they can be found in Appendix A. Respondents' essays were analysed and scored against the checklist. Students who have satisfied the requirements of the checklist were awarded an 'Achieved' status of the conventions. The number of achieved criteria for the both categories of conventions in the writing of literary criticism were tabulated and presented as enumerated data.

A Focus Group Interview, or a FGI, is a group interview which does not follow the alternate question-answer sequence found in typical interview sessions. A focus group interview differs from a conventional one-on-one interview in that focus groups are perceived as less threatening to many research participants; creating a non-threatening environment can encourage participants to discuss perceptions, ideas, opinions, and thoughts (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The synergistic effect of the focus group can help to produce data or ideas

which may not surface from a one-on-one interview (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Another reason why this method was chosen was because the respondents have studied together in the same class for one and a half years prior to this study. The respondents for the FGI have developed a strong rapport and are comfortable with each other. Hence, this eliminated the possible strains which may happen in conventional FGI arrangements.

In this study, a FGI was conducted at the end of the TLC. The list of questions for the FGI was created after the analysis of respondents' essays was completed. This was to allow the findings from the FGI to answer the 'how' and 'why' perspectives of this study. Five respondents volunteered to participate in the FGI. They were assigned with pseudonyms in order to ensure anonymity. In the beginning, respondents were prompted to discuss their thoughts on the challenges and difficulties that they faced in composing literary criticisms for the subject studied. Later, the discussion moved into eliciting their perceptions and responses on the use of genre based approach in the writing of literary criticism, and how the approach has changed the way they write literary criticism essays.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion would be based on the results derived from the analysis of the students' pre, post, delayed post tests and excerpts of the FGI conducted after the students have undergone the genre-based writing instruction. The discussion would begin by examining the results based on the two conventions taught in this study before it moves into discussing the respondents' opinions on the TLC.

RHETORICAL CONVENTION

TABLE 3. Respondents' mastery of Rhetorical Conventions

RHETORICAL CONVENTIONS (n=19)		PRE	POST 1	POST 2
1	Present a brief overview of the literary theory used or the literary text analysed.	8	19	19
2	A 'one-sentence summary' of the short story analysed	1	12	15
3	Establish a claim or a thesis statement in introduction	4	16	19
4	State a topic sentence	9	17	18
5	Begin with a short description of a scene from the literary work.	6	11	17
6	Able to highlight the scene without narrating the entire scene	2	11	15
7	Choose one point from the literary theory selected which is related to the scene in the literary work	1	6	14
8	Present analysis, interpretation and argument which will link the scene to the point in the literary theory	3	16	16
9	Present creative, insightful personal comments to the scene in the literary work.	6	9	11
10	Restate thesis statement	2	16	17
11	Brief comment on either the literary work or the literary theory engaged in the essay.	16	16	19

Table 3 shows the number of students who have achieved the rhetorical conventions in the pre-test, post-test, and post-test 2 (delayed). More students have achieved the conventions in the post-test and delayed post-test. All respondents have managed to achieve the conventions of writing the introduction and conclusion at the end of the study. However, do notice that item 7 and item 9 have the least number of students demonstrating the mastery. As there are no respondents who regressed in their mastery of the conventions during the post-test, students who were taught to write literary criticism using the genre-based writing instruction retained their mastery of the rhetorical conventions taught.

During the FGI, the respondents were revealed to have developed an understanding of the structure, otherwise known as genre awareness, as they were able to explain the structure of the paragraphs in their literary criticism essays. Respondents have also shared with the researcher on how they have benefited from the genre-based writing instruction in terms of their mastery of rhetorical conventions.

Jenny: It's helpful because there is a structure like for example, we will not focus on the interpretation for too long and ignore about the evidence part... so we can equally divide the length (content) of the writing... for example in the previous essay (pre-test), I wrote the criticism's definition and I'd go straight to the evidence, I won't make any comments or interpretation...

Wayne: I used to just babble all the way, now I can go to the main point. (What do you mean by babble?) It's the same point that I repeat it with different sentences. Now I'll be doing one sentence and go straight to the point...I know what to include in each paragraph...

Alex: not just in providing evidence but also how to write it in the writing and applying the theory...

Jenny reported that through the intervention, she has developed awareness on the elements that she had to include in every paragraph and she had to make sure that every paragraph she wrote should have a topic sentence, argument, textual evidence, interpretation and personal comments. Hence, she knew that for every paragraph that she writes, these elements should be present and they should be given equal attention to in writing. Wayne, on the other hand, has stopped the 'babble', where he wrote many sentences which only repeated the same points after knowing what to include in his writing. Alex's comments centred on how he has learnt to apply the theory of literary criticism when he writes the essay. He realised that there is more than just providing textual evidence but there are other elements which need to be included in a literary criticism essay.

However, one notable convention which was not achieved by quite a number of the students is presenting creative, insightful personal comments to the scene in the literary work. Students were not able to give personal comments to the scene in the short story that they have analysed despite being able to extract them for discussion in the literary criticism. This could be due to the nature of the convention, which requires creativity on the part of the respondents and can be tricky to coach via the writing instruction. Though respondents may be able to replicate the genre, they may not be able to replicate personal interpretation and comments as per the exemplar, as these sentences depend highly on the individual response on the part of the respondents.

Jenny : I think I struggle (in) writing the intelligent (creative, personal) comments, I have to guess what the writer actually tries to say in his work, but at the same time I couldn't just say anything I like... whatever I said has to be somehow related to what the writer is trying to say...

Earlier in the interview, Jenny was able to express the conventions which she needed to show in her literary criticism essays. However, when it came to providing creative, insightful comments on the author and literary work, she struggled. The idea here is to present a plausible interpretation, where the idea is highly original, personal and yet at the same time, logical and can be substantiated by evidence in the text. This troubled Jenny in her attempts of replicating the genre. On the other hand, Wayne and Keith provided another possible reason which occurred during the deconstruction stage of writing.

Wayne: looking at things that we have written and what was given (exemplar), we can do it but not now, rather than looking at more advanced level (exemplar used in the deconstruction)... the essay we are reading is too advanced, cannot relate it to the essay that we have written.

Wayne gave a frank remark about the level of the language and the structure used in the exemplar studied during the deconstruction stage of writing instruction, which he considered to be too advanced for himself and his friends. Therefore, the difficulty that they face during the deconstruction stage of writing resulted in them not being able to produce the required genre conventions in the independent construction stage. This outcome is explained by Keith, as shown in the excerpt below:

Keith : I like the writing part more than reading... when I was referring back (to the exemplar), I wanted to write in that structure as a beautiful essay ... but I couldn't go to that level and that troubles me a lot.

In his sharing, Keith voiced his frustration for not being able to write at the level as given in the exemplar. Hyon (2001) posited that one of the possible pitfalls of a genre-based approach in the teaching of writing is when students are not able to replicate the macrostructure used in the exemplar. The reasons why respondents were not able to replicate a number of the rhetorical conventions of literary criticism could be due to the fact that they were unable to replicate the conventions as shown in the exemplar. In other words, using the theory of scaffolding, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was too big for the learners to bridge. Thus, it is suggested that the selection of exemplar for the deconstruction section is very important, as essays, which are written in forms and language, that are too complex may overwhelm and demotivate the learners. Assurance must also be given to learners whereby the conventions that they are to replicate should be within their own language ability, as they should be challenged and not demotivated from writing beyond their capability.

LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL CONVENTIONS

TABLE 4. Respondents' mastery of Lexico-grammatical Conventions

LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL CONVENTIONS (n=19)		PRE	POST 1	POST 2
1	able to use third-person, impersonal voice in the essay.	15	17	18
2	use of words such as 'reflected, shown' to relate the literary theories to the elements/themes of the literary text	4	13	18
3	use of hedging words to offer possible interpretation and to soften absolute claims	0	13	17
4	use of words such as 'illustrate, portray, signify, suggest' which are commonly used in literature to present a point of view or interpretation.	2	14	19
5	able to use words such as 'posit, postulate, opined, claim' to express opinions by scholars when providing citation.	0	1	3
6	tense: student can choose between simple present or simple past and use it consistently	10	12	17
7	able to link two or three phrases together using appositives and relative words	10	17	17
8	able to mix the use of active and passive voice to bring about sentence variety.	13	17	19

Text analysis from the respondents' pre- and post- tests have shown that students made significant improvements in their use of lexico-grammatical conventions (Table 4). All students have achieved their mastery of the lexico-grammatical conventions number 4 and 8 while only a small few did not achieve the rest of the convention. However, item number 5 was only achieved by a small number of students. Further analysis via FGI revealed students' preference to either use the 'according to' phrase in their in-text citation for their literary

criticism, or to include a citation at the end of the sentence. Related cognates such as ‘posit’, ‘postulate’, ‘opined’ and ‘claim’ were notably absent from the literary criticisms written by the respondents. Though the absent of the criteria did not affect the respondents’ ability to communicate their ideas, the essays written would lack a variety of style when it comes to incorporating in-text citations.

Respondents have also shared in the FGI that they have developed an awareness of the use of lexico-grammatical conventions in the writing of literary criticism.

Keith: specific one is how to use certain words such as illustrate, portray, to help us say what we are trying to say... certain words help us to relate things easily...

Keith commented that he was able to use words such as ‘portray’ and ‘illustrate’ to help him relate his arguments to the textual evidence. He also shared that he knew the functions of the words very well as the analysis of his essay revealed that he was one of the respondents who was able to use these words in his essays for both post and delayed post-tests.

Jenny: I would try to use ‘may’, ‘could’ so as not to judge the writer but rather giving my interpretation....

Jenny’s response was oriented towards the use of hedging words, which had eliminated her tendency to use absolute claims, and she was able to provide her personal interpretation of the literary evidence in her post and delayed post-tests. In her own words, she claimed that she no longer ‘judged’ the writer but was rather trying to decipher the writer’s intention of writing the text.

Alex: I learn more words, the way they write (in the sample essays), whole structure with the grammar. The way to write analysis.... put down word differently to write for more advanced and deeper than secondary (school) essay...

As for Alex, lessons learnt from the lexico-grammatical conventions helped him to write at a more advanced level compared to the essays he wrote in secondary school. He claimed that studying lexico-grammatical conventions closely during the deconstruction process benefited him, as he was able to use more sophisticated vocabulary and sentence patterns.

However, during the interview, one of the respondents also lamented how he was encumbered by the rigid structure, as having to meet the conventions have stopped him from expressing his thoughts in writing. He also provided a reason as to why he believed he was unable to replicate the language given.

Keith: I feel my language is very weak, I can’t achieve it (the level in the exemplar) now and if I continue to push myself I’ll not be able to complete the essay...

His further elaboration indicated that he was stretched to his limit in his writing ability. He also admitted that his language ability was limited and attempting to replicate the genre conventions was an arduous task for him. Hence, it is possible that the results of the study could be influenced by a number of factors as revealed in the FGI; the first is their perception towards the use of genre-based approach and the other is language proficiency of the respondents. Therefore, as a class would consist of students of different abilities, the application of scaffolding would have to be looked into, as some students may need to be further assisted as they learn to write after being taught using the genre-based writing

instruction. This would be particularly important in the ESL settings, where not only scaffolding needs to be given to the mastery of content, but it would go hand in hand with the scaffolding for the use of language itself.

RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE TEACHING LEARNING CYCLE

In the FGI, the respondents were also prompted to share their opinions of the three stages of the Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC). The respondents have given many comments, particularly on the joint-construction process, which have provided a deeper insight into some of the issues surrounding the implementation of the TLC.

First, it was discovered that many respondents expressed mixed opinions on the joint construction stage. In the FGI, Jenny gave a favourable response to the joint construction stage, as she thought that joint construction gave her a sense of involvement in the writing.

Jenny: I like joint writing because we tend to get involved in the writing.

Her remarks of students being more involved can be interpreted as students could develop an ownership of the essay as they participated in the writing process. However, Pauline shared why she did not enjoy the joint construction process.

Pauline: We jumped from one place to another...it's quite superficial, I am not into writing together (joint construction)... it's like people throw many things at the time and not trying to capture something... it's not deep enough.

During the joint construction stage, where students and the researcher co-wrote an essay together, respondents were providing phrases and ideas at random hoping to hit the right phrases. For Pauline, she found the entire process to be very disorganised and the product (joint-written essay) was not deep or engaging enough for her. Respondents in the FGI also realised that their classmates' participation in the joint construction process had been lacking. In response to the researcher's question, they have shared a myriad of reasons which can explain their lack of participation in the joint construction process.

Pauline: they want to but they don't know how (participate in the discussion). They feel like they don't know anything. They do not have a sense of belonging (ownership) to the essay ... they ask themselves why can't I think at that level (of the instructor)

Jenny: they are passive learners, used to spoon feeding, waiting for the lecturers to give them.

These two respondents gave quite different perspectives on the reasons why the joint construction stage did not receive encouraging responses from the respondents. Pauline opined that respondents felt that they do not know anything and they do not feel an ownership towards the essay. Students were also frustrated as they were not able to think at the level of their instructor and thus become demotivated and began to detach themselves from the joint-construction process. Jenny, on the other hand, thought that her friends were hoping for the lecturer to spoon-feed the respondents by giving the answer if they remained passive throughout the process. Nevertheless, other respondents defended their classmates by providing a closer observation of what happened during the joint-construction process, which pointed out to the fact that the researcher could have been very prescriptive and controlling during the joint construction process.

Keith: I wrote a lot of things on the paper, but nothing that I have written can be used in the class (joint construction)... the level of thinking (lecturer and himself) is different... so I just kept quiet.

Jenny: they get disappointed if their answers were wrong, they will stop giving because their answer was wrong...

Wayne: You (the researcher) are looking for your answer but other acceptable answers come along, you said yeah... but the students, they do not understand your perspectives...your students couldn't understand how you are thinking...

The feedback given by the interviewees in the FGI has revealed that the joint construction process became a demotivating experience for the students to participate as the researcher may have exerted too much control to the extent that the respondents were forced to conform to the mind of the instructor, as the respondents were of the mind that there is a right and wrong answer to their attempts. Students repeated attempts were seldom taken into consideration in the joint construction process. The remarks provided by the respondents in the FGI may indicate that the instructor was very rigid and unable to accept the answer given unless the answer was in line with what he had in his mind. Hence, respondents who had their responses repeatedly rejected eventually stop participating. One criticism of genre-based approach is that teacher may be too prescriptive over their teaching and subsequently results in disempowerment of students (Kay & Dudley-Evans, 1998). The criticism on the approach stemmed from the fear that the teacher could be too prescriptive, i.e. has very clear delineation on how a text is supposed to be written in a particular task and any form of variation is considered as a violation of the convention of a particular genre. So there is a need for the writing instructor to let go and allow students the creative room to compose the literary criticism.

IMPLICATION & CONCLUSION

This study may have been carried out in a classroom setting, but has gained insightful findings in the aspects that a teacher has to pay attention to whenever he or she teaches students to write for a literature class. After being taught to write literary criticism using the TLC, the respondents have mastered and retained their mastery of a large number of conventions in the writing of literary criticism. Nevertheless, there is an extent to which the genre-based writing instruction was able to assist in the acquiring of genre conventions used in a literary criticism. First, the instruction was not able to assist students to write creative, insightful comments in the literary work. Second, a number of the respondents also struggled in selecting a suitable literary theory and linking it to the textual evidence highlighted in their essay. The respondents have also developed a mixed opinion on the TLC process used in this study.

There are a few lessons which surfaced at the end of this study. First, it is important that students possess the mastery of the content before they can be given the opportunity to compose an essay for the subject or discipline that they are undertaking. ESL learners who learn content-based subjects in English have the double jeopardy of tackling both mastery of content knowledge and also the language use for each of the subject learnt (Halliday & Matthiesen, 1999). The genre-based instruction in this study, via the teaching of rhetorical and lexico-grammatical conventions, addressed students' needs of writing for a content-oriented subject (literature) in a second language (English) simultaneously. However, the

outcome of this study could indicate that it may be helpful to help students master the subject content first before the focus can be concentrated on the writing and the use of language, as students who had troubles with using literary theories could not benefit from the genre-based writing instruction. This argument aside, Wilder and Wolfe (2009) suggested that undergraduate writing instructors should teach the content knowledge of literature and also the procedural knowledge of writing for literature hand in hand. Either way, the dual focus of content and language use for writing purposes should be taught to students.

Second, the nature of the subject also requires a slightly different approach in terms of supplementing genre-based writing instruction. This study's context is in the discipline of literature, which is rather subjective in nature. Therefore, the ability to write a highly original piece of writing would require more than just the coaching of the writing itself, the skills of analysing and interpreting a literary work would be useful if it is taught together with the writing instruction. Lecturers not only assess students on their ability to write, but also the ability to critique a literary work as shown via their writing. This modified approach would hopefully help future learners to tackle the rhetorical conventions which were not able to be mastered by the respondents of this study.

Third, the findings from the interview highlighted a few issues which any writing instructors need to be mindful of in using genre-based writing instruction. For the deconstruction stage, instructors should use examples which are written at the level that the learners can aspire to emulate, but not too advanced that the students find it difficult to analyse. This is to ensure that the students would still be scaffolded as they develop their ability to write literary criticism essays. As for the joint construction, it is very important that the teacher refrains from being overly controlling and prescriptive. Students should be given the space to express their ideas and thoughts and to feel that they play an equally important part of the joint-writing process. The instructor, therefore, would be expected to play a balancing game on trying to guide students to write the essay and at the same time, to acknowledge and incorporate students' ideas in the essay as much as the instructor can accommodate. Another important point to note is that the writing instructor needs to bring him or herself to the level just slightly higher than the students in their thinking and use of words, so that the students will not feel that the instructor's thinking process is beyond their ability to comprehend. A writing instructor can consider engaging in a thinking aloud protocol to help the students observe and hopefully imitate the instructors' line of thought.

In the end, this study attempted to bridge the gap of genre studies, which has either chosen to focus on rhetorical or the lexico-grammatical aspects of the writing. Genre-based instruction as used in this study has shown that ESL students were able to compose literary criticism essays which meet both rhetoric and lexico-grammatical conventions. However, the writing instructor would need to know the nature of the subject content that he or she is teaching, and to supplement the writing instruction with relevant skills and knowledge which would facilitate students' ability to write within the discipline itself. The implementation of the teaching and learning cycle also requires the delicate facilitating from the part of the writing instructor, as this ensures both learners' ownership of the cycle and also the successful acquisition of the genre conventions.

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APPENDIX A

Checklist for Rhetorical & Lexico-grammatical Conventions

Name:

No	RHETORICAL CONVENTIONS	PRE	POST 1	POST 2 (DLY)
	<u>Introduction:</u>			
1	Present a brief overview of the literary theory used or the literary text analysed.			
2	Establish a claim or a thesis statement in introduction			
	<u>Body of content :</u>			
3	State a topic sentence			
4	Begin with a short description of a scene from the literary work			
5	Able to highlight the scene without narrating the entire scene			
6	Choose one point from the literary theory selected which is related to the scene in the literary work			
7	Present analysis, interpretation and argument which will link the scene to the point in the literary theory			
8	Present creative, insightful personal comments to the scene in the literary work.			
	<u>Conclusion:</u>			
9	Restate thesis statement			
10	summary of why the scenes in the literary work reflect the literary theory chosen for the essay.			
11	brief comment on either the literary work or the literary theory engaged in the essay.			
	Total Rhetorical Analysis	/17	/17	/23
	LEXICOGRAMMATICAL CONVENTIONS	PRE	POST 1	POST 2 (DLY)
1	able to use third-person, impersonal voice in the essay.			
2	use of words such as ‘reflected, shown’ to relate the literary theories to the elements/themes of the literary text			
3	use of hedging words to offer possible interpretation and to soften absolute claims			
4	use of words such as ‘illustrate, portray, signify, suggest’ which are commonly used in literature to present a point of view or interpretation.			
5	able to use words such as ‘posit, postulate, opined, claim’ to express opinions by scholars when providing citation.			
6	tense: student can choose between simple present or simple past and use it consistently			
7	able to link two or three phrases together using appositives and relative words			
8	able to mix the use of active and passive voice to bring about sentence variety.			
	Total Linguistic Analysis	/8	/8	/8
	GRAND TOTAL	/25	/25	/31

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