

# LECTURE 05: GENRE ANALYSIS: ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH SETTINGS

## 1. Definition

A genre is a specific type of discourse, used by a specific speech community in order to achieve specific purposes depending on conventions shared background knowledge and context.

Many ESP scholars (Swales, 1990, 2004; Bhatia, 2002 among others) agree on the centrality of the communicative purposes and their importance in identifying genres. Together with the rhetorical content, these communicative purposes are recognized by members of the discourse communities to which the genres belong. Examining the interplay between discourse community, rhetorical content and communicative purpose is known as genre analysis. English for Specific Purposes suggests a system of analysis that demonstrates differences between texts and, in this respect, discourse analysis may overlap with genre analysis. A distinction between the two terms is provided by Dudley-Evans and St. Johns:

Any study of language or, more specifically, text at a level above that of the sentence is a discourse study. This may involve the study of cohesive links between sentences, of paragraphs, or the structure of the whole text. The results of this type of analysis make statements about how texts – any text - work. This is applied discourse analysis. Where, however, the focus of text analysis is on the regularities of structures that distinguish one type of text from another, this is genre analysis and the results focus on the differences between text types, or genres.

## 2. Discourse Community

As hinted earlier, speech community is recognized in terms of shared linguistic norms within human groups defined by geographical space, social class, cultural environment, ethnicity, etc. There are differences between discourse community, which is a concept referring to people deliberately sharing a set of writing conventions within an academic context, and speech community which is an ethnographic term referring to human groups sharing linguistic practices within a spatiotemporal context. Although the concept of discourse community derived from speech community, some obligatory demarcations have to be drawn between the two terms. The main difference is in terms of setting with the former operating in research settings where standardized forms and conventionalized strategies are deployed by members pursuing public goals and the latter being a formation with no functional and goal-oriented discursive practices but sharing such communicative needs of the group as “socialization and group solidarity.

## 3. Genre (CARS model)

The model proposes three main **Moves** for the introduction section in research papers and a number of **Steps** used to express each move:

## **Move 1: Establishing a Territory**

Step 1: Claiming Centrality

and/or

Step 2: Making Topic Generalisations

and/or

Step 3: Reviewing Items of Previous Research

## **Move 2: Establishing a Niche**

Step 1A: Counter-claiming

or

Step 1B: Indicating a Gap

or

Step 1C: Question Raising

or

Step 1D: Continuing a Tradition

## **Move 3: Occupying the Niche**

Step 1A: Outlining Purposes

or

Step 1B: Announcing Present Research

Step 2: Announcing Principal Findings

Step 3: Indicating Research Article Structure

## **Examples**

- Move 1 “Establishing a territory” through “Claiming centrality,” “Making topic generalization(s),” and “Reviewing items of previous research”: *“Scholars within genre studies have established . . . and many other qualities shared with other members of its category.”*
- Move 2 “Establishing a niche” through “Indicating a gap”: *“Yet all of those sources of variations gathered together cannot account for . . . .”*
- Move 3 “Occupying the niche,” through “Outlining purposes: *“In this article, I want to explore the implications of . . . ,”*

## **4. Move Structure**

### **4.1. Move Definition**

Initially, move as a unit of generic analysis was not assigned a concrete definition as Swales, the instigator of ESP genre analysis and a previous analyst in the framework of the systemicist school, simply thought of the RA genre as consisting of sections containing each a number of communicative strategies which articulate the communicative purpose of each section of the genre. Based on this understanding, move can be regarded as a

unit of analysis expressed in constituent steps signaled by particular linguistic choices. However, as genre analysis has expanded within the framework of ESP due to academic globalization and the subsequent pedagogical needs that arouse among foreign novice writers, the notion of move has gained prominence and has become central to genre analysis as a rhetorical unit most deserving of further scrutiny. As a result, move has been approached differently and ESP scholars have tried to give it clear-cut definitions. Drawing from earlier ideas, some discourse analysts argue that moves vary in length ranging from several paragraphs to at least one proposition<sup>54</sup> while some others see it as a “text segment made up of a bundle of linguistic features (lexical meaning, propositional content, and illocutionary force, etc.) which give the segment a uniform orientation and signal the content of discourse in it.”

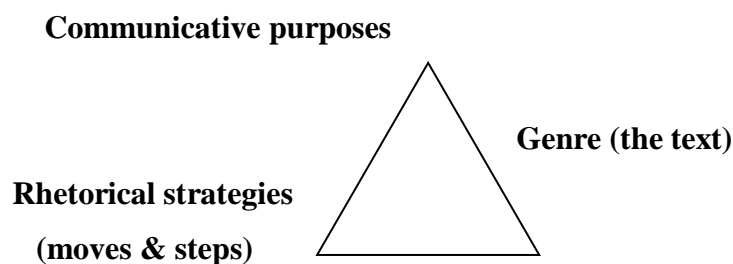


Figure 1. Genre in ESP, adapted from Anis Bawarshi and Mary J. Reiff, *Genre, An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy* (Indiana: Parlor Press, 2010).

Bhatia (2002) and Swales (2004) have reiterated the complex nature of genre and the arduous task of identifying their communicative content. According to Bhatia (2002), one of the main objectives of genre analysis is to understand and to account for the complex and dynamic world of texts, complex in “that it incorporates texts of various kinds, serving often overlapping and at the same time conflicting communicative purposes.” Similarly, Swales (2004) has modified his emphasis on communicative purpose as a defining feature and classifying mechanism of genre. Instead of seeing genre as carrying specific, clear-cut communicative goals, he proposes “repurposing genres” by characterizing them by the following metaphors:

Genres are frames for action → guiding principles for achieving purposes using language

Genres are language standards → expected conventions of layout and language

Families and prototypes → genres are more or less similar to “core” exemplars

### Move Analysis

Move analysis is a top-down approach used to describe texts’ communicative content in a straightforward manner. However, in order to carry out a move analysis to identify the move structure of a text, one has to follow a certain number of criteria some of which are believed to be those lexico-grammatical clues that more clearly

signal the communicative function of successive stretches of text. The other clues which help recognize a transition from one move to another is inference from the context and knowledge of the genre conventions.

Table 5. General Steps often used to Conduct a Corpus-Based Move Analysis

**STEP 1** Determine rhetorical purposes of the genre

**STEP 2** Determine rhetorical function of each text segment in its local context; identify the possible move types of the genre

**STEP 3** Group functional and/or semantic themes that are either in relative proximity to each other or often occur in similar locations in representative texts.

These reflect the specific steps that can be used to realize a broader move

**STEP 4** Conduct pilot-coding to test and fine-tune definitions of move purposes

**STEP 5** Develop coding protocol with clear definitions and examples of move types and steps

**STEP 6** Code full set of texts, with inter-rater reliability check to confirm that there is clear understanding of move definitions and how moves/steps are realized in texts

**STEP 7** Add any additional steps and/or moves that are revealed in the full analysis

**STEP 8** Revise coding protocol to resolve any discrepancies revealed by the inter-rater reliability check or by newly 'discovered' moves/steps, and re-code problematic areas

**STEP 9** Conduct linguistic analysis of move features and/or other corpus-facilitated analyses

**STEP 10** Describe corpus of texts in terms of typical and alternate move structures and linguistic characteristics

Douglas Biber et al., *Discourse on the Move, Using Corpus Analysis to Describe Discourse Structure* (USA: John Benjamins, 2007), 34.

This analysis of moves in texts is based on a number of categorized elements which distinguish between texts from different domains, the elements can be divided as follows

Table.1 Genre specific approaches in text analysis

Notions	Rhetorical functions	Cohesive devices	Specific lexicon	Communicative purposes
Time and place Quantity and quality	Identifying Explaining Exemplifying Illustrating	Which are used to link sentences, paragraphs and ideas in moves.	Words phrases and expressions which are peculiar in this subject area.	Related to the rhetorical functions and how they are used in the text.