

Developing EFL Students' Academic Literacies in Writing Through Genre-Based Pedagogies

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Abstract

The area of academic literacy/ies has become a major concern in higher education. There is a call for serious engagements in order to develop students' academic literacies' knowledge, awareness and practice. University teachers face ongoing educational concerns and challenges related to academic literacies in writing; these concerns are usually overlooked and university students find themselves exposed to limited discipline-related, discourse-related or genre-related literacies. The study of genre in academic contexts has contributed to gain a better understanding of the role that different writing genres play in students' literacy enculturation process and academic success. These genres reflect certain specific practices in different disciplines, and different ways of knowing and doing things. Students are usually felt to be unprepared for academic tasks, and this lack of readiness is related to their inadequate levels in academic literacies. In response to this, teachers usually feel urged to find better ways of teaching writing and to offer support for under-prepared students to reduce the risk in being academically less, or even not, appropriate or successful. In other words, there are many academic literacy challenges for both teachers and students; these challenges reflect serious concerns related to the students' academic success, and they mainly involve students' lack of mastery of academic discourse norms and conventions, reading and analysis of writing genres (constant exposure), knowledge related to text writing in

order to construct social identities within given discourse communities and so forth. The first aim of the present research paper is to review the literature in order to explore the definition of academic literacy, its theories and the nature of its acquisition. The second aim of the research involves a discussion of the main approach adopted to teach academic writing in tertiary education. It places focus on discussing, analyzing and reflecting upon the most appropriate approach that writing teachers should adopt to help promote EFL students' academic literacy (ies) and writing proficiency in their disciplines. Last, but not least, the present research draws upon advancing the adoption of the genre pedagogy in approaching the teaching of academic writing to EFL students for purposes of improving and boosting their academic literacies in writing.

Keywords: Academic literacy (ies), writing, reading, genre, discourse analysis, academic success.

Résumé

Le domaine de la littératie(s) académique est devenu une préoccupation majeure dans l'enseignement supérieur. Il y a un besoin pressant de s'engager sérieusement à sensibiliser et développer les connaissances et la pratique des compétences des étudiants en matière de jargon académique. Les enseignants universitaires font face à des préoccupations et à des défis éducatifs continus liés à la littératie académique dans l'écrit ; ces préoccupations sont généralement négligées et les étudiants universitaires se trouvent exposés à des littératies limitées liées à la discipline, au discours ou au genre. L'étude du genre dans les contextes académiques a contribué à mieux comprendre le rôle que jouent les différents genres d'écriture dans le processus d'inculturation des étudiants et de leur succès scolaire. Ces genres reflètent certaines pratiques spécifiques dans différentes disciplines, et différentes manières de savoir et de faire les choses. Les

étudiants sont généralement perçus comme n'étant pas préparés à des tâches académiques, et ce manque de préparation est lié à leur niveau inadéquat en littératie académique. En réponse à cela, les enseignants se sentent généralement contraints de trouver de meilleures façons d'enseigner l'écrit et d'offrir un soutien aux étudiants insuffisamment préparés afin de réduire le risque d'échec scolaire. En d'autres termes, il existe de nombreux défis en matière de littératie académique pour les enseignants et les étudiants; ces défis reflètent des préoccupations sérieuses liées au succès scolaire des étudiants, et ils impliquent principalement le manque de maîtrise des normes et des conventions du discours académique, la lecture et l'analyse des genres d'écriture (exposition constante), les connaissances liées à l'écriture de textes afin de construire des identités sociales au sein de communautés de discours données, et ainsi de suite. Le premier objectif du présent article de recherche est de passer en revue la littérature à ce sujet afin d'explorer la définition de la littératie académique, ses théories et la nature de son acquisition. Le deuxième objectif de la recherche implique une discussion de la principale approche adoptée pour enseigner l'écriture académique dans l'enseignement supérieur. Il met l'accent sur la discussion, l'analyse et la réflexion sur l'approche la plus appropriée que les enseignants de l'écrit devraient adopter pour aider à promouvoir la littératie académique des étudiants d'ALE et la maîtrise de l'écriture dans leurs disciplines. Dernier point, mais non des moindres, la présente recherche s'appuie sur l'adoption de la pédagogie de genre dans l'approche de l'enseignement de l'écriture académique aux étudiants d'ALE dans le but d'améliorer et de renforcer leurs connaissances académiques en écriture.

Mots-clé: Littératie(s) académique (s), écriture, lecture, genre, analyse du discours, réussite scolaire.

Introduction

In higher education contexts, English as a foreign language (EFL) students are required to acquire and develop academic literacy skills, especially in writing different texts and genres. These skills enable them to read academic texts fluently and write them appropriately and successfully. The importance of acquiring academic literacy skills in writing stems from the fact that students' reflect an inadequate level. Designing a good academic literacy skills' program can enable students to write in an appropriate and successful manner vis-à-vis a given type of discourse in a given discipline. When entering university, first language (L1) students may come with some skills, which is not the case in EFL contexts, then continue their academic literacy skills development. There are others, however, who come with weak skills and find themselves facing the dilemma of not having the required skills for academic success in higher education. The case of foreign languages is even more serious.

It is important to emphasize a central point. The academic writing courses developed for English students in English departments do not necessarily, or should not necessarily, reflect the skills that other fields in the humanities require. The literacy skills that may seem central in one field may not be so in another. This is important to bear in mind because, when entering university, students can study for academic or professional purposes. For that reason, each field and each department should specify its academic literacy skills in writing, and link them to the skills related to their field in the first place.

Some of the challenges that face universities and EFL language teachers is the fact that a good deal of students lacks the basic academic literacy skills. The solution to that is to find ways to tackle students' shortcomings and weaknesses by introducing

courses designed specifically and related to the field or the discipline in question.

In the last quarter of the century, our understanding of what literacy is and its main focus has changed gradually. We moved away from conceiving it as a matter of individual and independent skills, de-contextualized from any kind of meaningful content and context. Nowadays, literacy has come to be recognized as being closely connected to the social, historical, political, cultural and personal institutions in which people use language and literacy skills. Put simply, literacy is no longer associated with the individualized skills, but rather, it is claimed to be dependent on a set of factors. These are what Widdowson (1979) termed, the who, what, where, and when. These factors constitute the context of communication, and, hence, meaning and/or messages depend to a large extent on them.

1. The Nature of Academic Literacy

Nowadays, the theme of literacy constitute the buzz word in the field of higher education. This area attracts continuous attention given the complexity it poses in academic contexts for it to be defined and for literacy practices to be applied. In first language teaching, the term can involve the skill of listening and speaking as complementary skills. In other contexts, the term involves the skill of reading and writing as complementary skills. Another view will consider the four language skills as forms of academic literacy that are complementary (Blue, 2010, p. 1-2).

One of the important goals of primary education is to help pupils to read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding. This obviously goes beyond the word level and involves dealing with a variety of different text

types with different patterns of organization and different purposes (Blue, 2010, p. 1-2).

Academic literacy can, then, have various definitions and can center around different aspects. The focus of this paper is on the development of one main aspect of academic literacy: academic writing skills at the micro level. Generally speaking, the term academic literacy is used “referentially: that is as referring to reading/writing texts in academic contexts, rather than as indexing a critical field of inquiry with specific theoretical and ideological historical roots or interests” (Lillis & Scott, 2007, p. 7).

Put another way, academic literacy is related to certain specific practices that focus on teaching student writers the skills that they need in reading/writing an academic assignment be it an essay, dissertations, report and so forth. In this sense, academic literacies cannot be taught in a short period. They have to be taught over a period of time. Teachers should design courses in academic literacy that focus on teaching the skills related to reading and writing.

As it has been asserted earlier, the term literacy, as used in the present research paper, is related to the reading and the writing skills. That is, reading and writing are the two central faces of academic literacy. Processing the ability to sign one’s name can, for instance, be a sign of literacy in some situations. In other situations, literacy can be considered as the ability to read and understand a complex manual, then apply the information to a given task.

The previously held conceptions that used to view literacy as reflecting just the ability to read and write have gradually been dropped. The ability to read and write cannot guarantee the effective application of these skills in real life situations in a

variety of contexts. In light of such concerns, the concept of **functional literacy** has emerged to denote the use of reading and writing skills in specific contexts. The major focus of functional literacy is on the instrumental uses of literacy (Fingeret, 1994, p. 3-4).

Literacy has been conceived and approached differently in the different language teaching/learning contexts. The following models reflect the different aims and focus of each language literacy view. Each model is said to have its major principles and concerns. These models reflect specific orientations in teaching and teachers can adopt them in designing their courses and curriculum to achieve some predetermined instructional purposes.

1.1. Literacy as Skills

The view of literacy as skills is still dominant nowadays. It considers literacy as a set of independent skills that exist without context. Literacy is conceived as being able just to encode and decode. To use Fingeret's (ibid., p. 5) words, literacy as skills refers to "sounding out words and studying lists of letter sounds, syllable sounds, and words in isolation."

1.2. Literacy as Tasks

Literacy as tasks reflects the learner's ability to apply the previously learned skills in an independent and successful way for specific task accomplishment. This view ignores the situation where the tasks are performed, since "the ability to do the task is considered stable across situations and requires only individual skill achievement" (ibid., p. 6). The context and the continuous change in situation are not given importance, since it is believed that the situation does not bring any change to the nature of the task.

1.3. Literacy as Social and Cultural Practices

This model of literacy perceives tasks as part of the situation in which they are performed. When placed in their social and cultural settings, tasks and literacy can be understood more closely and relatively as social and cultural practices. To perform a task in a given context, one can rely on the cultural knowledge s/he has as different from the same task performed in another context.

ESL/EFL literacy programs practitioners should have as their start the view of literacy as social and cultural practices since students' immediate needs are associated with certain social situations (work, house, health care). Nowadays, many literacy educators seem to be oriented towards the teaching of literacy as skills and tasks, however (ibid., p. 7).

Literacy program designers in ESL/EFL contexts, place focus, then, on different points. In programs of literacy as practices, for instance, the main concern is to help students to use and bring their skills in different contexts to accomplish tasks in different social situations. This does not make literacy only instrumental. Put another way, literacy as practices is when one is engaged in literacy as an actor in a social setting. In this sense, literacy behaviours cannot be separated from their setting of occurrence (ibid., p. 6).

Again, literacy is no longer conceived as a matter of individual skills that are de-contextualized from any kind of meaningful content and context. Literacy is claimed to be dependent on a set of social and cultural factors; these are what Widdowson (1979) termed, the **who** (discourse community), **what** (type of discourse), **where** (context and place), and **when** (time). These factors form the context of communication of the message. To use Fingeret's (1994, p. 3) words, "literacy skills cannot be separated from the content and setting of the message being read or written."

In the same line of thought, Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) claim that academic literacy is a term that covers a complex set of skills that involve not only the mastery of reading and writing. In this sense, we can have different kinds of literacy: media literacy, technological literacy, political literacy and so forth. The focus in the previous types of literacy is on the person's ability to interpret and express oneself appropriately; focus is not on the written word only. In this sense, academic literacy will include language skills at a sophisticated level, including the ability to use appropriate disciplinary discourse (Blue, 2010, p. 1-2).

Harris (1990) points out that the term literacy is an inclusive term compared to other terms used in the field of education. The term is more inclusive because we can take the view that the skills of reading and writing are also influenced by the skills of speaking and listening, and hence they can all refer to literacy, as has been pointed earlier. The term can also refer to knowledge of particular content, language and practices. To use Johns' (1997, p. 2) words, the term literacy refers to "strategies for understanding, discussing, organizing, and producing texts."

Other researchers, such as Gee (1991), hold the same view of literacy as having to do with the social context of occurrence, by claiming that literacy encompasses the social context whereby discourse is produced and it is related to the roles and communities of the text readers and writers. To use Johns' (1997, p. 2) words again, as an inclusive concept, literacy "encompasses learning as well as products, form as well as content, readers' as well as writers' roles and purposes."

Discussion of literacy makes the term, then, a complex and problematic one to define, especially in academic contexts. For a clear and deep discussion of literacy, Johns (ibid.) argues that

the term should first be pluralized. In this way, we will get a set of literacies. To use her (1997) words,

there are many literacies, especially in academic settings, acquired in different ways and for different purposes. For a variety of reasons, some of us can read literature more effectively than we can read engineering texts, generally because of our past experiences, personal motivation, or community affiliation. As professionals, we can write successfully for some academic journals, yet our manuscripts are rejected by others. Therefore, at any time, a literate person relates in a more sophisticated manner to some texts, roles, and contexts than to others (p. 3).

Literacy is, hence, said to integrate many social, cultural, cognitive and historical influences both on readers and writers alike in text processing or productions (*ibid.*, p. 2).

2. Literacy Theories and Classroom Practices: The Nature of Acquisition

The discussion of literacy calls attention to its acquisition and to the theories that influence classroom practices. Those theories are related to the students and teachers' perceptions of academic literacy acquisition and how the pre-held theories take their pedagogical shape in real life teaching/learning contexts. A central point to raise, though, is that literacy is not static, it is dynamic and students can continue their literacy growth and development (*ibid.*, p . 3).

In a previous discussion, it has been pointed out that the nature of academic literacy is complex and problematic. To

discuss the nature of literacy, we should first talk about the nature of acquisition that each one of us holds. This is of central importance since the answer will reflect attitudes and beliefs about how abilities to read and write are acquired.

There are different theories of acquisition that used to overshadow teaching and learning in the few past decades, and which still have dominance over many of our teaching perceptions and practices nowadays. Three dominant theories can be discussed.

2.1. Traditional Approach

Proponents of this approach believe that acquisition can take place only after long and systematic exposure to oral language. Only then, we can develop a literate behavior. This belief reflects one of the main tenets of the audio-lingual method, reflecting thus traditional views of learning and acquisition (Richards & Rogers, 1986).

2.2. Whole Language Approach

The proponents of this view believe that the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) should be taught together and simultaneously. It is only then that literate behaviors develop.

2.3. Social Forces Approach

There is another group of researchers who hold the belief that literacy is closely related to some social forces. Learners should relate texts to culture in their literacy experiences (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993).

These beliefs reflect the development made in educational theories. They all have direct and immediate implications for teaching (Johns, 1997, p.4).

3. Academic Literacy and Discourse Analysis

The subject of academic discourse and literacy in academic or professional contexts has received a great deal of interest as a recurring theme in the area of research. Certain academic purposes in the competency based teaching is that learners should develop knowledge, understanding and be able to explore disciplinary differences and their influence on how knowledge is communicated. In addition to that, learners are required also to develop a high level of language knowledge, such as the knowledge of discourse analysis (BALEAP, 2008).

It should be born in mind, though, that in the present research, we are interested in writing for academic purposes in the English field of study and not in writing across disciplines, despite the fact that the focus of many research has been on writing across disciplines. Writing for academic purposes in a given field of study or across disciplines is dependent not on the texts themselves; focus is on their disciplinary contexts (Nesi & Gardner, 2012). Disciplinary context can form the starting point for any kind of investigation.

Analyzing the text-types of one particular genre or texts belonging to different genres will enable teacher educators and research practitioners to classify, analyze and understand the features that are common to certain texts belonging to the same genre or features shared across genres. Features that are discipline-specific can also be identified. That is why there is a constant call for discourse analysis practices and the development of an awareness with regard to the use of genre theory to identify discourse features of specific or generic boundaries. Attention

should also be paid to disciplinary variations (Bhatia , 2004). Hyland (2004, p. 11), for instance, claims that the teaching of academic writing should be approached from a discipline-specific framework. As a proponent of discipline-specific approaches, he (2004, p. 11) states that,

While all academic discourse is distinguished by certain common practices, such as acknowledging sources, rigorous testing, intellectual honesty, and so on, there are differences which are likely to be more significant than such broad similarities. The ways that writers choose to represent themselves, their readers and their world, how they seek to advance knowledge, how they maintain the authority of their discipline and the processes whereby they establish what is to be accepted as substantiated truth, a useful contribution and a valid argument are all culturally-influenced practical actions and matters for community agreement.

Hyland (ibid.) claims further that writing does not depend only on situations or independent texts. Writing reflects social and institutional practices in different disciplines. This is clearly expressed by Hyland in the following statement:

Writing cannot be understood solely in terms of either immediate situations of writing or from individual texts; rather, it reflects, and in turn constitutes, social and institutional practices derived from contexts which are principally disciplinary. This means that while academic knowledge is frequently represented in style guides, ESP materials and University ‘enhancement

courses' as attending to transferable writing skills, students actually have to readjust to each discipline they encounter. Paraphrasing, citing, reviewing the literature, and other standard features of EAP courses are not uniform practices reducible to generic advice (Hyland, 2004, p. 145).

Academic discourse should be, then, analyzed using various appropriate methods. After that, teacher practitioners can be able to develop courses and curriculum to help learners in different disciplines in academic discourse to acquire certain text-types and genres. The acquired texts and genres are the ones which are required for students to understand in order to produce them and be a part of the academic discourse community in their disciplines. To be considered as members of the same discourse community, students have to gain knowledge of how knowledge is constructed and communicated, the conventions of language use, and so forth. Through raising students' awareness toward these matters, students will be, then, well-equipped to identify similarities and differences between the different texts of academic genres such as essays, master dissertation, etc. Awareness will be in terms of the communicative purpose of the text-type and the genre, the audience to whom the texts are produced (novice, experts), the structure of the texts at the macro level or the micro level.

Hence, discourse analysis, genre approaches and genre analysis can be the appropriate analytical framework for language teachers and practitioners. They will enable them to identify text and genre features, understand them, then design their teaching materials to help students understand text types and genres and use the necessary linguistic and stylistic strategies required for

successful and appropriate production. This will, in turn, help students achieve higher degrees of expertise and be accepted as members of the same discourse community.

4. Literacy Theories, Genre and the Teaching of Writing

Based on the previous discussion of academic literacy and discourse analysis which led to the involvement of the theme of genre analysis, we come now to highlight the theories and approaches adopted by teachers in approaching the teaching of writing. There are some important theories, current and traditional approaches, to teaching writing which have influenced previous teaching practices and which still influence current teaching of writing in L1, L2 and FL. These approaches underlie many modern classrooms teaching practices.

The traditional approach to writing used to place focus on formal language and text organization. Texts are categorized into rhetorical modes (exemplification, definition, etc.) with ways of organizing content. Practice of writing these modes takes the form of text imitation with regard to forms. Such kind of practice reflects grammar based classes where focus is on correct forms at the level of the sentence. Such pedagogies still reflect a keen interest in surface-level, formal descriptions of language and discourse patterns. The underlying belief is in the ‘purity and primacy of form’. To use Johns’ (1997, p. 7) words, “language is form(al); all other linguistic, psychological, and social factors are secondary, or in some cases, ignored.”

The principles of traditional theories can be summarized as follows: “literacy is acquired through directed practice, focused on the production of perfect, formally organized language patterns and discourses” (Johns, 1997, p. 7). In a similar vein, Richards

and Rogers (1986, p. 50) state that, “good habits are formed by giving a correct response rather than making mistakes.”

There was a kind of shift from this theory of acquisition and another theory came to existence. The new theory has a different focus. Instead of focusing on grammar and discourse modes, the new theory places focus on individual readers and writers (learner-centered). This theory views that literacy can be acquired as students seek meaning and process texts that are of interest to them and their lives. One agent is central to these theories and language pedagogies: the student.

Contrary to the traditional views, in this theory there is no recognized, standard set of language forms that is superior to others, or sets of language that are scientifically determined and appropriate for all occasions. All in all, in this new theory, literacy is conceived as being related to individual meaning making; no focus is placed on form (Raimes, 1991).

After that another paradigm shift took place and societal views started to gain prominence. The reason for this shift is the ignorance of the social factors that come into play in learning. To use Johns’ (1997) words, “our students are aware of the social construction of discourses; they know that they are influenced, and judged, by other cultures and languages from which they come and into which they hope to enter.”

After this paradigm shift, new developments in literacy came to existence whereby their main core has been social factors. The socio-literate views are based on exposure to discourses from a variety of social contexts. Through constant exposure, learners will develop theories of genre, and those who can successfully process, understand and produce certain texts and genres are members of the same discourse community. Today,

many researchers embrace this view and reflect that in their practices.

Becoming literate is learning not only the textual conventions, but also the conventional acts of a particular community, and thus becoming a part of that community as it engages in the activity of literacy. Recent support to that view comes from cognitive psychology. Literacy involves the acquisition of knowledge that is arranged as schemata, or as chunks. Such knowledge includes semantic knowledge, or content, as well as linguistic or rhetorical structure. Schemata can be broadened to include models of the structure and style of various types of discourse in certain situations (Purves, 1991).

5. Academic Literacy in Writing and the Academic Community

In higher education, academic literacy has a direct link to a given community: experts, researchers, teachers, students and so on. Through constant exposure to different text types and genres, students become members of academic communities. The concept of academic community is related, though they differ somehow, to other notions such as discourse community (Swales, 1990). Discourse communities are made up of a group of people, sharing the same knowledge, principles and values with goals determined by these communities and expressed in their practices in their fields and disciplines. In the same line of thought, Silver (2006) adds that these discourse communities recognize that their members also share other central things like ideology, style, as well as other discursive characteristics. He (2006, p. 38) states that, “we may define discourse community as people working within a particular area of knowledge with a shared repertoire of ideas and resources, who manifest their sense of community through the

lexis, styles, ideologies, epistemological assumptions, etc. of their discourse (their documents) over time.”

Students can start as neophytes in discourse communities. Then, gradually, they achieve greater degrees of expertise (Bhatia, 1993). As has been stated in previous discussions, expertise in literacy is not static; it is dynamic and learners can improve and develop through constant interaction with discourse in a given discipline.

6. Genre Pedagogy and Language Literacy

Genre pedagogies represent a valuable resource for teachers of writing. They assist teachers in their teaching, and teachers, in their turn, can assist their students in finding their way to produce effective and relevant texts. Instead of focusing on the process of composition, the content of texts, or the abstract prescriptions of disembodied grammar, genre pedagogies enable teachers to ground their courses in the texts that students will have to write in their target contexts, thereby supporting learners to participate effectively in the world outside the ESL classroom. Genre theory and genre research play a central role in preparing language teachers to teach second language writing and confidently advise them on the development of curriculum materials and activities for writing classes (Hyland, 2004).

Genre pedagogies have provided language teachers with a better understanding of how language and writing functions. Genres reflect specific practices within the same discipline and cross-disciplines. It reflects special ways of knowing and doing (Carter, 2007).

The theme of academic literacy, and writing in particular, has attracted lot of attention and importance in higher education research. Interest in such an area has been the main focus of many studies which have taken different perspectives in

investigation. This interest stems from the fact that researchers came to recognize that academic literacy in writing is an essential factor to students' academic and professional success. Besides that, research in the area comes from the fact that the academic literacy acquired by students is not satisfactory. In other words, students are not well-prepared to deal successfully with the demands of a given field of knowledge (Vásquez, 2005).

In higher education academic contexts, students of different fields and disciplines may find themselves obliged to read and write different text types belonging to different genres. They find a kind of specialized knowledge, and to be able to deal with that, students are required to develop certain skills and strategies to take part in the activities of text study, analysis and production.

Studies of genre from different perspectives contribute a great deal in understanding how writing functions in each field and give useful insights of how performances should be shaped (Bazerman, 1994). Written genres reflect specific practices of disciplines and how this is done in each genre of writing. To be able to write in a given genre, for instance, students should develop literacy in academic writing first of all. They should have competent knowledge with regard to the different genres that they are required to produce. Genres are tools that mediate the different activities performed in a given context. Students are required to learn these tools and know how to use them in their interaction with members of the same discourse community (Russell, 1997).

Conclusion

The role of experts (researchers, teachers, language practitioners, and so on) in different fields is of central importance, but it is usually given less importance. That is why, it is of great

importance to investigate teachers' conceptions about literacy in academic writing. Students' conceptions should also be emphasized since this will help both of teachers and students to clarify the process of literacy in academic writing and how writing is carried in specific disciplines within specific discourse communities. Future studies should also focus on the previous aspects related both to the teachers and the students' concepts vis-à-vis academic literacy in writing. This should be addressed given its central importance in the teaching and learning process; conceptions and perceptions have a great influence on shaping teaching and learning practices. That is to say, teachers' conception of literacy in academic writing and their teaching will be based upon a given approach to the genre or the text-types belonging to the same genre. Focus, then, should be based on the way literacy in academic contexts is conceived in the different study-disciplines and the discourse communities.

The centrality of such questions lies in the fact that being able to investigate and answer them will better position teachers and students in understanding how members of discourse communities address literacy in academic writing, and how academic literacy in different genres and text-types is acquired (acquisition) in a specific field. Focus on how students acquire genres has great implications vis-à-vis students' academic literacy acquisition process.

In higher education, teachers are required to include a variety of text-types and genres. Students' engagement in academic literacies provides some necessary information of how to plan and carry out genre based writing instruction in EFL contexts. Moreover, informed by systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1973) as a theory of language in use, teachers can be guided in developing students' ability to construct texts using structural and

linguistic features of the written language. Using this language theory and the genre approach to approach literacy and teach writing can be effective in terms of addressing issues in writing. In other words, adopting a systemic functional framework and a genre paradigm can serve as a concrete tool in classroom to design, implement and reflect on instruction.

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