Genre-based Approaches and ESL/EFL Writing: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive systematic literature review of the associations between genre-based approaches (GBAs) and English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) writing. It provides an overview of GBAs and second language (L2) writing. The review further elaborates on the theoretical backgrounds of GBAs and ESL/EFL writing. The article then critically reviews 38 studies conducted on GBAs and ESL/EFL writing in the past 20 years (2003-2023). A methodological review was also performed to analyze the various research methods employed by previous researchers. Four major themes of research on GBAs and ESL/EFL writing were identified: research articles' writing, thesis or dissertations writing, argumentative writing, and other types of professional writing. Additionally, three major methodological approaches were identified: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The article culminates by discussing the implications of the results of this review and recommends promising directions for future research.

Keywords: genre-based approaches, writing pedagogy, systematic review, English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL)

1. Introduction

Genre-based approaches (GBAs) have been prevalent and influential since their proposal by the distinguished American linguist John Swales in the 1980s, especially in the field of English for academic/specific purposes (EAP/ESP) (Bhatia, 2014; Swales, 1990; C. Tardy, Caplan, & Johns, 2023). Researchers in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) School defined the genre as a staged and goal-oriented socio-communicative activity within a specific culture (Zhai & Razali, 2023), and proposed a genre-based teaching and learning cycle (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013; Martin, 2009). Currently, GBAs are gaining popularity in English teaching and especially in writing instruction (Derewianka, 2003; Yasuda, 2011, 2015, 2017; Zhang & Zhang, 2021). Several scholars have utilized GBAs in English academic writing within classroom settings to enhance students' genre awareness and knowledge, as well as their generic competence in English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) contexts (Deng, Chen, & Zhang, 2014; Huang & Jun Zhang, 2020; Hyland, 2003, 2007). Hyland (2003) underscored the significance of GBAs in teaching second-language (L2) writing by viewing GBA as a social response to the writing process (Hyland, 2003). Swales (2004) perceived GBA as an instructional approach for analysing rhetorical moves and language features in English academic writing (Swales, 2004). Therefore, research on GBAs, which play a crucial role in improving learners' English writing performance, may influence genre theory and writing pedagogy in ESL/EFL contexts.

There has been notable progress in GBAs and L2 writing in recent decades (Deng et al., 2014). GBAs and L2 writing have been applied in academic and professional teaching contexts for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Numerous articles concerning GBAs and L2 writing have been published, but three are only review articles (Derewianka, 2003; Paltridge, 2014; Zhai & Razali, 2023). Derewianka (2003) focused solely on trends and issues related to the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) genre-based approach (Derewianka, 2003). Paltridge (2014) primarily discussed the historical context of GBA in first language (L1) writing (Paltridge, 2014). Zhai and Razali (2023) conducted a systematic literature review on the development of GBA for teaching ESL/EFL writing (Zhai & Razali, 2023). Cheng (2021) pointed out theoretical and practical gaps in the current review articles on GBAs and ESL/EFL writing and emphasized the need for scholars to identify trends and contribute to the field's development (Cheng, 2021).

Therefore, this review article critically evaluates previous studies on GBA and ESL/EFL writing from 2003 to 2023 to identify major themes and potential gaps in GBA from theoretical and empirical perspectives. It seeks to synthesize the status of genre-based approaches and writing pedagogy in the ESL/EFL context and interpret the current research landscape. It is anticipated that the current review will also inform future research endeavors. Three broad research questions were used to guide the conduct of this study:

1. What is documented by existing studies report regarding GBAs and ESL/EFL writing?

2. What major themes on GBAs and ESL/EFL writing are prevalent in the current research?

3. What methods have been utilized in previous research on GBAs and ESL/EFL writing?

The authors set out to help practitioners identify what the primary research focus was over the past two decades, recognize the major methodological approaches used in the literature, understand gaps in GBAs and L2 writing, and obtain a foundation for future investigations on GBAs and ESL/EFL writing.

2. Methodology for Literature Review

2.1 Selection Criteria

The research group in this study implemented specific selection criteria and processes to ensure that the research process was comprehensive, systematic, and scientific. We employed the following criteria for conducting traditional literature review based on suggestions proposed by Li and Wang (2018) (S. Li & Wang, 2018) to select relevant research on GBAs and L2 writing :

a. Firstly, the review articles should focus on the use of GBAs in writing pedagogy within ESL/EFL contexts and exclude research related to L1 writing.

b. Secondly, review articles should be written in English and be published between 2003 and 2023 to track recent developments in GBAs within writing pedagogy studies. We have excluded non-English publications because of the reviewer team's language backgrounds. As the GBAs have been widely utilized in English academic writing pedagogy (Zhai & Razali, 2023), there is a dearth of literature on non-English studies using genre-based approaches for writing instruction, which allows researchers to conduct in-depth analysis within the scope.

c. Thirdly, review articles could be both theoretical and empirical studies published by either student authors or expert authors in different genres to minimize the likelihood of bias and arbitrariness (S. Li & Wang, 2018).

d. Lastly, review articles should be published in peer-reviewed journals or academic books to guarantee that selected studies would be of high quality and for ease of access. Unpublished MA theses, PhD dissertations, and conference proceedings were excluded due to the need for subjective decisions about study quality and uneven accessibility.

Adhering to the above rigorous criteria ensured that the researchers conducted a focused and rigorous examination of GBAs and L2 writing within the designated timeframe and context.

2.2 The Review Procedures

We conducted a systematic literature search to identify research articles on the following online databases, Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, SAGE, Wiley, Springer, and ProQuest within the time range from 2003 to 2023. Keywords used during the search included genre, genre pedagogy, genre-based approach, genre-based pedagogy, genre-based instruction, ESL writing, EFL writing, L2 writing, and second language writing. We also referred to reputable journals on GBAs and EFL/ESL writing, such as English for Specific Purposes, Journal of Second Language Writing, Language Teaching, Foreign Language Annuals, Reading & Writing Quarterly, System, and Journal of English for Academic Purposes, to identify research articles. Retrieved articles were then assessed for relevance by examining their abstracts and the full texts.

A thorough examination of the selected studies was done to collect study details including authors' names, study contexts, sampling procedures, study methodologies, and theoretical frameworks. A total of 38 pertinent articles were selected for inclusion in this review as shown in appendiceal information. An inductive coding approach was utilized to identify primary themes from the selected articles. The main themes identified were research focuses, methodologies, and gaps in current literature.

3. Findings

This section provides a brief overview of selected articles, and the research foci and research methods that have contributed to the body of knowledge on GBAs and ESL/EFL writing. Likewise, this section presents research themes and their supporting examples drawn from analyzing the existing literature.

3.1 An Overview of the Existing Research on GBAs and ESL/EFL Writing.

Table 1 details the geographical locations where 38 studies research studies on the GBAs were conducted. The research studies were conducted in various geographical contexts, notably Asia (18), America (12), and Oceania (4). Fewer studies originated from the UK (2), Spain (1), and the Middle East (1). Several studies were conducted in America in which is ranked highest in research publication output in linguistics and has internationally recognized journals in ESP and academic writing. Notably, Asia's rising number of publications signals a growing scholarly interest in GBAs within academic writing disciplines.

Ken Hyland's pioneering article that was issued in 2003 to study the associations of GBAs and process theories and emphasize the significance of GBAs to teaching in EFL/ESL writing settings, is listed among the selected 38 articles (Hyland, 2003). Since then, numerous scholarly articles have been produced in this domain. A summary of the selected 38 articles and book chapters, including their publication type, genre, country or region, research methodology, and major findings is found in Appendix A.

Table 1. The geographical location of the 38 genre-based approach studies

Country/Region	No.	Studies
Asia	18	China, Hongkong, and Taiwan: Hyland (2003); Dong & Lu (2020); Gao & Pramoolsook (2023); Hyland (2004); You & Li (2021); So (2005); Huang & Zhang (2020); Fang (2021); Zhang & Zhang (2021); Chen & Su (2012)
		Japan: Yasuda (2011, 2015); Myskow & Gordon (2009)
		Singapore: Yang & Allision (2004)
		Malaysia: Lim (2006); Loi et al. (2016)
		Thailand: Kanoksilapatham (2015)
		Nepal: Neupane Bastola & Ho (2023)
USA	12	Swales & Feak (2012); Cotos et al. (2017); Friginal & Mustafa (2017); Casal et al. (2021); Swales (2004); Maher & Milligan (2019); Ramos (2017); VanDerHeidi (2018); de Oliveira & Lan (2014); Abdel-Malek (2019, 2020); Brisk et al. (2021)
Oceania	4	New Zealand: Basturkmen (2009, 2012); Loi (2010)
		Australia: Paltridge & Starfield (2020)
UK	2	Hyland (2007); Heron & Corradini (2023)
Spain	1	Soler-Monreal (2015)
Middle East	1	Mitchell & Pessoa (2017)

3.2 Major Themes on GBAs and ESL/EFL Writing

Four main themes were identified from the reviewed studies, namely research article writing, theses or dissertations writing, argumentative writing, and other types of professional writing. In this section, we illustrate how GBAs have been used in these studies using the previously mentioned four main themes and the themes of literature as an organizing principle.

3.2.1 Studies Focused on Research Article Writing

Twelve studies focused on the genre of research article writing. Swales (1990, 2004) described the generic structures of introductions of research articles within the ESP genre-based approach and developed the CARS model (Swales, 2004; Swales & Swales, 1990). The CARS model's schematic structure, along with its rhetorical features, garnered significant attention from scholars. It also inspired other scholars to apply the ESP genre-based approach to other sections of research articles (RAs), including abstracts (Friginal & Mustafa, 2017), introductions (Dong & Lu, 2020; Gao & Pramoolsook, 2023; C. K. Loi, 2010), methods (Cotos, Huffman, & Link, 2017; Lim, 2006), results (Basturkmen, 2009), discussions (Basturkmen, 2012), conclusions (C. Loi, Lim, & Wharton, 2016), syntactic complexity of RAs (Casal, Lu, Qiu, Wang, & Zhang, 2021), and the overall generic structure of the research articles (Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Yang R & Desmond A, 2004).

Friginal and Mustafa (2017) compared research article abstracts from U.S. to those from Iraq using genre-based and corpus-based approaches. By demonstrating the similarities and differences between RA abstracts from the U.S. and Iraq, Friginal and Mustafa (2017) offered insights into how writers can structure such abstracts (Friginal & Mustafa, 2017).

Loi (2010) conducted a corpus and comparative study on the generic structures of research article introductions in both Chinese and English. Loi (2010) then identified distinctions in communicative purposes and differences in moves and rhetorical devices (C. K. Loi, 2010). Dong and Lu (2020) integrated both corpus-based and genre-based approaches to investigate the rhetorical moves in the introductions of engineering research articles. Their study enhanced students' genre knowledge and writing performance (Dong & Lu, 2020). Gao and Pramoolsook (2023) examined the rhetorical structures of electronic engineering research article introductions written by Chinese, Thai, and native English speakers using the genre analysis theory framework. Structural variations among the three groups of writers not only heightened the electronic engineering researchers' rhetorical awareness, but also provided them with insights to compose research articles. Such variations also benefited genre practitioners that design academic writing curricula (Gao & Pramoolsook, 2023).

Another study by Loi et al. (2016) combined genre-based approach with appraisal theory to analyze the conclusions of English and Malay RAs and offer pedagogical insights for EAP writing (C. Loi et al., 2016). Additionally, a cross-disciplinary study by Casal et al. (2021) delved into the syntactic complexity of research article genres and outlined genre-based differences in syntactic structure use that subsequently guided EAP writing pedagogy (Casal et al., 2021).

3.2.2 Studies Focused on Theses and Dissertation Writing.

The second theme comprehensively addressed theses and dissertations (n=6). RAs and theses and dissertations are similar in that they both use the IMRDC structure. However, theses and dissertations also include sub-genres such as acknowledgments (Hyland, 2004). Thesis and dissertation writing genres have increasingly garnered scholars' attention because they are an essential academic genre (Hyland, 2004; Maher & Milligan, 2019; Neupane Bastola & Ho, 2023; Paltridge & Starfield, 2020; Soler-Monreal, 2015; You & Li, 2021).

Hyland (2004) constructed a genetic structure of acknowledgments in thesis writing and described the differences among theses from various majors (Hyland, 2004). Soler-Monreal (2015) conducted a corpus investigation on cross-linguistic rhetorical variations of doctoral dissertations in computer science written by English and Spanish authors; there was a difference in Move 3 in the literature review section

of the dissertations (Soler-Monreal, 2015). Conversely, Maher and Milligan (2019) integrated corpus and genre analysis into the thesis of MSc students in engineering. Their results indicated that genre and corpus analysis enhanced the writing techniques of MSc students (Maher & Milligan, 2019). Paltridge and Starfield (2020) qualitatively examined and outlined the types of doctoral theses and their macro-generic structures. Their findings illustrate how to instruct master's and doctoral students on thesis and dissertation writing (Paltridge & Starfield, 2020).

You and Li (2021) explored the rhetorical moves of the literature review sections of both master's theses and doctoral dissertations in EFL settings. They demonstrated that both masters' and doctoral level authors understood the rhetorical moves and conventions of this genre based on instruction and practice. Such findings could facilitate the development of EAP learners' curriculum (You & Li, 2021). Neupane Bastola and Ho (2023) analyzed the generic structures of sixty literature reviews of Ph.D. dissertations based on the revised CARS model's analytical framework. They found no distinctions between Move 1 and Move 2 strategies but found significant variations in Move 3 strategies. Neupane Bastola and Ho's (2023) findings indicate that when English learners are equipped with effective genre-based instruction, they can produce theses and dissertations with appropriate rhetorical structures and linguistic features (Neupane Bastola & Ho, 2023).

3.2.3 Studies Focused on Argumentative Writing.

Six other studies primarily focused on argumentative writing. The ESP genre-based approach to argumentative writing showcases disciplinary features frequently encountered in academic writing domains such as newspapers, history, and others. So (2005), who centered on the argumentative writing genre and used the newspaper genre and ESP genre-based pedagogy, posited that knowledge from different genres could be transferred interchangeably. By relying on ESP genre-based pedagogy, the researcher presented newspaper genres and set specific contexts under the instructor's guidance for learners to deliberate on with peers and practitioners, and ultimately complete the writing tasks autonomously. Subsequently, the instructor provided learners with feedback on their compositions which they used to revise them. Newspaper genres aided learners in augmenting their genre knowledge which they effectively applied during an argumentative writing process (So, 2005).

Similarly, VanderHeidi (2018) conducted a move analysis on students' argumentative writing and performed a text analysis of classroom discussions while teaching argumentative essays in a literature course using the ESP genre-based approach. The genre-based approach not only fostered learners' rhetorical maneuvers and genre consciousness, but also offered insights for future argumentative writing instruction, the professional development of literature teachers, and methodologies for teaching both literature and writing (VanDerHeide, 2018).

Zhang and Zhang (2021) investigated the argumentative writing performance of 74 non-English major sophomore students using a combination of ESP and SFL GBAs. The 74 EFL learners were randomly divided into two groups: an intervention group that adopted genre-based approaches and a control group that used a conventional product-oriented approach. The students' progress was evaluated through pre- and post-writing tests, questionnaires, and interviews. Learners in the experimental group outperformed the control group in move structures, content, rhetorical knowledge, and overall writing quality. The study also provided pedagogical insights (Zhang & Zhang, 2021).

The three additional studies were conducted to enhance learners' argumentative writing skills using the SFL genre-based framework. Ramos (2015) delivered an academic persuasive course, specifically designed for 20 adolescent high school English learners, that emphasized writing academic persuasive essays within the ESL curriculum utilizing the SFL genre-based framework. Students' posttest scores in participants' linguistic quality when composing persuasive essays exceeded their pretest scores illustrating the potential of such an approach to augment adolescent English learners' persuasive writing abilities (Ramos, 2015). Mitchell and Pessoa (2017) conducted a qualitative study using an SFL genre-based framework to scrutinize the argumentative writing of history undergraduate students in an ESL environment. Distinct genre-based instruction—like making claims, acknowledging sources, and quoting—augmented students' genre awareness, yielded positive learning outcomes, and addressed the gap in the literature regarding argumentative writing genre in university-level history courses (Mitchell & Pessoa, 2017). Huang and Zhang (2020) examined the impact of the SFL genre-based approach on the argumentative writing performance of non-English major university students in EFL contexts. Students were randomly assigned to either an intervention group that adopted the SFL genre-based approach, or a comparison that followed the traditional method. Pretests, immediate posttests, and delayed posttests were then used to assess students' writing capabilities through argumentative writing tasks. The intervention group outdid the comparison group in their argumentative writing in terms of content, organization, and language usage (Huang & Jun Zhang, 2020). In conclusion, ESP, and SFL-informed genre-based methodologies offer English learners some effective strategies to improve their argumentative writing skills.

3.2.4 Other Types of Professional Writing

Although discussions on GBAs and L2 writing predominantly focus on certain academic writing contexts, such as research articles, theses or dissertations, and argumentative writing, several studies did not fit into either of these three categories. Some of the reviewed studies examined how GBAs benefitted L2 writing instruction in specific academic or professional settings. These articles are often referred to as "occluded genres" (Swales, 1996). These genres include e-mail writing (Yasuda, 2011), summary writing (Chen & Su, 2012; Yasuda, 2015), recounts (Abdel-Malek, 2019, 2020; De Oliveira & Lan, 2014), university application letters (Myskow & Gordon, 2010), professional reflective writing (Heron & Corradini, 2023), and autobiography writing (Brisk, Tian, & Ballard, 2021). The occluded genres are less prevalent than teaching research articles, theses dissertations, and argumentative writing.

Yasuda (2011) designed a fifteen-week Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) genre-based instruction for 70 Japanese undergraduate students. The study explored students' substantial progress in genre awareness, perceptions, e-mail writing competence, and language skills through quantitative and qualitative methods within the EFL context. The researcher illustrated an intersection of writing and language development in EFL settings (Yasuda, 2011).

GBAs are also effective in teaching summary writing. Chen and Su (2014) drew attention to the process of using a genre-based approach to instruct in summary writing. They tasked 41 EFL university students with summarizing 500-word texts and evaluated all student summaries based on language, organization, and content. The genre-based approach was powerful in enhancing students' summarization performance. Students demonstrated stronger skills in content and organization than in language use as confirmed by interviews with the same students (Chen & Su, 2012). In another study, Yasuda (2015) examined the shifts in 30 undergraduate students' genre awareness and their choices in meaning-making during pre- and post-instructional summary writing. Yasuda's (2015) investigation, which was conducted within the framework of the SFL genre-based approach in EFL contexts, emphasized the importance of summary writing instruction in such settings (Yasuda, 2015).

Three additional studies focused on genre-based approaches to recounting. De Oliveira and Lan (2014) employed SFL-informed genre-based pedagogy to investigate the role of scaffolding in teaching procedural recounts in a primary school classroom within an EFL setting. The authors used an example of an L2 recount to illustrate how SFL-informed genre-based pedagogy influenced the students' writing development. The authors also offered beneficial instructional practices for teaching English language learners (De Oliveira & Lan, 2014). Abdel-Malek (2019, 2020) conducted two studies examining the effectiveness of an SFL-informed genre-based approach in written Arabic recount of habitual events utilizing two distinct research designs – a multiple case study and a mixed-methods approach. The results of both studies indicated variations in the linguistic resources used in students' written recounts of habitual events. SFL genre-based approach enhanced Arabic learners' linguistic proficiency in crafting culturally informed recounts of habitual events. Both studies also addressed the pedagogical implications of teaching Arabic as a foreign language (Abdel-Malek, 2019, 2020).

A less common approach involves using GBAs for teaching leaners how to write university application letters, professional reflective writing, and autobiography writing. Myskow and Gordon (2009) explored the use of the ESP genre-based approach to instruct learners to write university application letters within an EFL high school writing context. Subsequently, learners were acquainted with the rhetorical structures and communicative purposes of the application letter genre. However, while rhetorical organizations from the GBA appear simplified and static, they are more complex and dynamic in real-world contexts. Thus, both teachers and students should be cognizant of the relationship between written texts and their social contexts to effectively implement the genre-based approach (Myskow & Gordon, 2010).

In another study, Heron and Corradini (2023) demonstrated how ESP genre analysis was employed to examine the generic structures and linguistic features of professional reflective writing. Their results indicate that a genre-based approach could support practitioners engaged in professional reflective writing and designing new writing courses (Heron & Corradini, 2023). Concurrently, Brisk et al. (2021) detailed how the SFL genre-based approach successfully supported autobiography writing instruction for bilingual students of varying English proficiency levels in EFL settings. The SFL genre-based approach influenced both writing and professional development (Brisk et al., 2021).

3.3 A Methodological Review of GBAs and ESL/EFL Writing

Three predominant methodological approaches on GBAs and ESL/EFL writing were identified from the literature: the qualitative research method, the quantitative research method, and the mixed research methods. Table 2 and Appendix A summarize and details these research methods, respectively. A significant number of empirical articles employed a qualitative and interpretative research design (n=18; 47%). Additionally, a substantial portion of the research articles utilized a statistical and quantitative method (n=14; 37%). Conversely, only a few studies adopted a mixed-method research design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods (n=6; 16%).

Table 2. A review of research methodologies

Research design	Empirical articles	Percentage
Qualitative	18	47%
Quantitative	14	37%
Mixed Methods	6	16%
Total	38	100%

Qualitative research methods were predominant in the dataset. Of the 38 selected research articles, 18 leveraged qualitative approaches to delve into teachers' and students' perceptions of GBAs in ESL/EFL writing (Maher & Milligan, 2019; Paltridge & Starfield, 2020; So, 2005; Swales & Feak, 2012). Various studies employed semi-structured interviews (Maher & Milligan, 2019; Myskow & Gordon, 2010), case studies (De Oliveira & Lan, 2014; Heron & Corradini, 2023), in-depth observations (Abdel-Malek, 2020), and narrative analysis (Brisk et al., 2021). Qualitative research methods helped to capture the beliefs and perspectives of practitioners and students regarding the implementation of GBAs in L2 writing.

The review also contained quantitative studies that adeptly integrated both corpus-based and GBAs to examine the rhetorical structures of research articles and the linguistic features of their rhetorical moves (Friginal & Mustafa, 2017; Gao & Pramoolsook, 2023;

Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Yang R & Desmond A, 2004). Quantitative studies also explored the generic structures and linguistic features of master's theses and doctoral dissertation writing (Maher & Milligan, 2019; You & Li, 2021) in ESL/EFL teaching contexts. The studies emphasized the utility of the GBAs combined with a corpus-based approach in evaluating the impact of these methodologies on writing research articles, theses, and dissertations. Additionally, quasi-experimental quantitative studies (Huang & Jun Zhang, 2020; Ramos, 2015) were implemented to assess the potential impact of a GBA on students' argumentative writing performance. In quasi-experimental studies, students were divided into two groups: an intervention group among whom a GBA was employed, and the control group among whom a conventional approach was utilized. Pretest and posttest measures were concurrently used to assess students' argumentative writing performance.

Quasi-experimental research was also employed within the mixed-method research category. The research studies were predominantly quasi-experimental studies that were supported by qualitative data collection through open-ended questions, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews. These studies were employed to gauge the efficacy of GBAs and understand both teachers' and students' perspectives on this methodology (Chen & Su, 2012; Neupane Bastola & Ho, 2023; Zhang & Zhang, 2021). Furthermore, some mixed-method studies used questionnaire surveys as pre- and post-instruction questionnaires, or surveys bolstered by interviews, reflective journals, and samples of student-produced writing (Dong & Lu, 2020; Yasuda, 2011).

Over the past three decades, GBA and L2 writing, which are backed by various paradigms, have gained significant attention. In this review, pure quantitative and qualitative research designs were prevalent. However, there was a notable scarcity of mixed method approaches in the selected articles limiting the comprehensive understanding of GBA in ESL/EFL contexts. Therefore, future scholars investigate the GBAs and L2 writing using mixed methods.

4. Discussion

The current review offers a comprehensive depiction of GBAs in L2 writing. It provides an overview of research profiles and delves into a thorough analysis of categories that center on the research foci of genre-based approaches in ESL/EFL writing. It includes themes such as research articles, thesis or dissertation writing, argumentative writing, and other types of professional and academic writing. Through meticulous reading and coding, we obtained a clear understanding of the selected research articles, their predominant focus areas for genre-based instruction, their underlying theoretical foundations, the respective methods employed, and their recommendations for future research. The findings from the current study span a broad geographical area underscoring the soaring global interest in genre-based instruction.

Genre-based approaches have increased in popularity in Asia. These approaches, that originated in America and Australia, have been used in academic and professional settings (Hyland, 2007; Swales, 2004; Swales & Swales, 1990). GBAs have been extended to the L2 writing context and have had a great impact on academic writing performance in the L2 writing context. China has also adopted these genre-based approaches. Moreover, GBAs have attracted considerable attention in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Nepal. In this review, 33 of 38 studies were centered on the application of genre-based approaches to tertiary students' writing. Likewise, Zhai and Razali (2023) assert that GBAs play a significant role in teaching L2 writing in higher education (Zhai & Razali, 2023). However, there was limited research conducted at both the tertiary and postgraduate levels, and most of the studies in this review primarily targeted students in scientific disciplines, and only a handful addressed the social sciences (Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2020). Thus, there is a compelling need for and a broader examination of genre-based approaches in higher education settings especially in the social sciences.

ESP and SFL genre-based approaches are very popular in ESP/EAP classrooms (C. M. Tardy et al., 2022). John Swale's remarkable work, Genre Analysis, has had a far-reaching impact on ESP genre-based pedagogy (Swales, 1990). According to Hyland and Jiang (2021), globalization and internationalization have triggered the rapid development of English for research and publication purposes, and in turn stimulated the widespread use of genre-based writing instruction (Hyland & Jiang, 2021).

The CARS model by Swales (1990) and the teaching-learning cycle by Systemic Functional Linguistics School (Hyland, 2004) have made huge improvements to ESL/EFL writing, especially regarding writing research papers, thesis and argumentative essays. The current review found that pedagogical needs and settings were often described in research articles and thesis and dissertation writing but with scarce details. Likewise, Swales and Post (2018) posited that ESP genre analysts devoted time to turning their research findings into pedagogical implications (Swales & Post, 2018). Therefore, the ESP genre-based approach researchers should offer more details on pedagogical applicability in the future to benefit ESP practitioners and students. From a theoretical perspective, there has been a trend of integrating an SFL genre-based approach to some relevant theories, such as sociocultural theory (Zhang & Zhang, 2021), grammatical metaphor (Yasuda, 2015), and scaffolding theory (Heron & Corradini, 2023), in EAP writing instruction in ESL/EFL contexts. Thus, future SFL genre-based approaches could be integrated into relevant theories to enhance the effects of GBAs in L2 writing contexts.

This review indicates that different research methods (i.e., qualitative-based, quantitative, and mixed methods) have been utilized to investigate the effects of GBAs on L2 writing. However, the literature on GBAs and L2 writing predominantly uses a qualitative-based approach which is subjective and maybe unreliable given the complicated and objective nature of assessing academic writing. Because genre-based approaches are often utilized in academic or professional contexts (Hyland, 2007), objective methodological approaches should to be developed for use in academic professional writing contexts.

Our review also indicates that the quantitative research method, particularly a combination of corpus-based and genre-based approaches, is an effective way to investigate the rhetorical moves of research articles and dissertations. A quasi-experimental statistical analysis of

argumentative writing samples is essential in evaluating participants' writing performance. Qualitative methods, such as reflective journals, observations, and semi-structured interviews, as suggested by Creswell (2013) (Creswell, 2013), can provide deeper insights into learners' writing performance. Future research should adopt mixed methods approaches to produce more comprehensive results. For instance, the corpus-based genre approach to analyze rhetorical structures and linguistic features of RAs, can be combined with students' reflective journals and writing samples to assess genre-based writing competencies. The quasi-experimental research design can also be enriched by qualitative techniques, such as stimulated recall interviews and focus group discussions, to gauge the efficacy of genre-based methods in EFL/ESL writing performance. The ultimate methodological choices made should effectively address study research questions. Achieving suitable outcomes in both breadth and depth will require the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data.

5. Conclusion

The current review, which was inspired by Hyland's (2003) seminal article on genre-based pedagogies (Hyland, 2003), focused on studies on GBAs and L2 writing published from 2003 to 2023.

There have been significant advancements in GBAs and EFL/ESL writing over the past two decades. On one hand, the review offers comprehensive insights into the existing research on research article writing, thesis or dissertation writing, argumentative writing, and other relevant professional writing. On the other hand, it highlights certain methodological challenges present in the literature and suggests potential avenues for future research. However, one limitation of this study was a restricted number of research articles and did not review high-quality articles from sources such as ERIC, Google Scholar, or other databases. A second limitation was that the review excluded non-English publications. This decision might prevent the inclusion of perspectives from stakeholders who enjoyed publishing in non-English outlets in their localized contexts. Research on GBAs and L2 writing has undergone rapid evolution in both topics and methodologies. The results may lead to the production of more valuable research in the field of GBAs and L2 writing the future.

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Appendix A

Author(s) & Year	Publication Type	Genre-type	Country or Region	Research method	Major findings
Hyland (2003)	Journal Article *Journal of Second Language Writing*	Multiple genres	Hong Kong	Qualitative research	Both teachers and students must know the importance of GBAs to L2 writing.
Yang & Allison (2004)	Journal Article *English for Specific Purposes*	40 RAs	Singapore	Qualitative research	The macro-structural organisation of RAs was found through the ESP genre-based approach.
Lim (2006)	Journal Article *English for Specific Purposes*	20 RAs	Malaysia	Qualitative research	The study explored rhetorical moves and linguistic features of method sections in RAs.
Basturkmen (2009)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	20 RAs	New Zealand	Quantitative research	The study investigated the results sections of RAs in language teaching.
Loi (2010)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	40 RAs introductions	New Zealand	Mixed method	Moves in RA introductions were studied, and the ESP genre-based approach proposed pedagogical implications for academic writing.
Basturkmen (2012)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	10 RAs	New Zealand	Quantitative research	The study provided a genre-based discussion of RAs and indicated that this approach was useful for other disciplinary sections.
Swales & Feak (2012)	Book chapter	Academic writing	US	Qualitative research	ESP genre-based approach helped me write research papers.
Kanoksilapatham (2015)	Journal Article *English for Specific Purposes*	180 RAs	Thailand	Quantitative research	The study enhanced engineering students' genre awareness when they faced the task of writing RAs.
Loi et al. (2016)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	40 RAs	Malaysia	Quantitative research	Integration of GBA and appraisal theory on RAs has pedagogical implications for EAP writing.
Cotos et al. (2017)	Journal Article *English for Specific Purposes*	900 RAs	US	Quantitative & Corpus-based	Genre writing pedagogy could enhance students' methods of writing performance in disciplinary writing.
Friginal & Mustafa (2017)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	675 RAs	US	Quantitative & Corpus-based	RA's abstract writing competence was improved through genre-based instruction.
Dong & Lu (2020)	Journal Article *English for Specific Purposes*	150 RA introductions	China	Mixed method	The integrated GBA enhanced students' genre knowledge and genre-based writing skills.
Casal et al. (2021)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	240 RAs	US	Quantitative &Corpus-based	The syntactic complexity of RA was analysed through GBA; the finding has implications for EAP writing pedagogy.
Gao & Pramoolsook (2023)	Journal Article *Ampersand*	36 RA introductions	China	Quantitative research	ESP genre-based approach to RA introductions enhanced practitioners' genre knowledge.
Hyland (2004)	Journal Article *English for Specific Purposes*	240 dissertations	Hong Kong	Qualitative research	GBA analysed the generic structure of acknowledgments.
Swales (2004)	Book Chapter	The PhD	US	Qualitative	Command of generic structure of PhD theses

		dissertation		research	were explored.
Soler-Monreal (2015)	Journal Article *English for Specific Purposes*	30 PhD dissertations	Spain	Quantitative research	The ESP genre-based approach analysed the rhetorical structure of Ph.D. thesis literature reviews.
Maher & Milligan (2019)	Journal Article *English for Specific Purposes*	57 master theses	US	Quantitative & Corpus-based	Integration of corpus and Swales's GBA has a great effect on master thesis writing.
Paltridge & Starfield (2020)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	100 PhD dissertations	Australia	Qualitative research	A genre-based approach to teaching dissertations helped Ph.D. students make proper choices in writing theses.
You & Li (2021)	Journal Article *English Teaching & Learning*	20 master's & 20 doctoral dissertations	Taiwan	Quantitative research	ESP genre-based approach improved PhD students' English dissertation writing.
Neupane Bastola & Ho (2023)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	60 PhD dissertations	Nepal	Mixed method	The ESP genre-based approach analysed the rhetorical structure of LR in the Ph.D. dissertation, which is useful for academic writing.
So (2005)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	Argumentative essay	Hong Kong	Qualitative research	Students improved argumentative writing skills and genre awareness using GBA.
Mitchell & Pessoa (2017)	Journal Article *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*	Argument genre in history	Middle East	Qualitative research	Students' argumentative genre writing in history improved by an explicit SFL genre-based approach.
Ramos (2017)	Journal Article *Journal of Education*	Persuasive essays	US	Quantitative research	SFL genre-based approach helped students write academic persuasive essays.
VanDer Heidi (2018)	Journal Article *Reading Research Quarterly*	Argumentative genres	US	Qualitative research	A genre-based approach can enhance argumentative writing teaching.
Huang & Zhang (2020)	Journal Article *Reading & Writing Quarterly*	Argumentative writing	China	Quasi-experimental research design	SFL genre-based approach improved students' argumentative writing in an intervention study.
Fang (2021)	Journal Article *Writing an Argumentative Essay*	Argumentative essays	China	Qualitative research	The genre-based approach effectively improved students' argumentative writing.
Zhang & Zhang (2021)	Journal Article *Sustainability*	Argumentative writing	China	Mixed method	Explicit genre-based writing instruction helped EFL learners improve argumentative writing.
Hyland (2007)	Journal Article *Journal of Second Language Writing*	Multiple genres	UK	Qualitative research	Useful in teaching L2 and curriculum development materials for writing classes
Yasuda (2011)	Journal Article *Journal of Second Language Writing*	E-mail writing	Japan	Mixed method	Students' genre awareness improved by the SFL genre-based approach.
Chen & Su (2012)	Journal Article *ELT Journal*	Summary writing	Taiwan	Mixed method	Students' summary writing improved using a genre-based approach.
Yasuda (2015)	Journal Article *Journal of Second Language Writing*	Summary writing	Japan	Quantitative research	The SFL genre-based approach enhanced students' genre awareness and improved summary writing.
de Oliveira & Lan (2014)	Journal Article *Journal of Second Language Writing*	Procedural recounts	US	Qualitative case study	SFL genre-based approach effectively improved science writing instruction in primary school.
Abdel-Malek (2019)	Journal Article *Foreign Language Annuals*	Recounts	US	Multiple case studies	Students' improvement in recounting showed the effectiveness of the Sydney School of GBA.
Abdel-Malek (2020)	Journal Article *System*	Recounts	US	Qualitative research	SFL genre-informed approach expanded students' written recount of habitual events.
Myskow & Gordon (2009)	Journal Article *ELT Journal*	University application letter	Japan	Qualitative interview	Attention should focus on the interaction between social context and genre.
Heron & Corradini (2023)	Journal Article *Teaching in Higher Education*	Professional reflective writing	UK	Case study	ESP genre-based approach improved teachers' professional reflective writing knowledge.
Brisk et al. (2021)	Journal Article *System*	Autobiography writing	US	Narrative analysis	Autobiography writing instruction benefits from SFL genre pedagogy.