

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**A GENRE-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING  
WRITING:  
REPORT WRITING FOR  
ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(EST)**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of  
Master in Education (TESL)**

**Faculty of Education**

**2010**

## ABSTRACT

The research documents an initiative in introducing a genre-based approach to writing English for Science and Technology (EST) reports in the Malaysian secondary school context for Form 5. The genre-based approach to writing was adapted from the English for Specific Purpose (ESP), the Australian genre-based educational linguistics and the North American New Rhetorical Studies. The approach was distinctive as it sought to use the genre-based pedagogy with English as a second language (ESL) students who take up EST as a subject in school. The aim of this research is to illustrate how and why such an approach may be applied to English as a second language (ESL) teaching in Malaysian schools. The study employed a qualitative research design and the data were obtained from several sources, namely a writing programme over a period of six weeks; collection of samples of students' pre-test and post-tests texts which were analysed using Swales' Move as developed by Swales (1990), and pre-test and post-test scores. The findings revealed that despite some limitations, the genre-based approach to writing made a significant positive impact on students' report writing performance. The students achieved control of the target report genre with improved use of technical and scientific explanations and examples to support content points as provided in the examination paper. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the genre-based approach to writing EST reports be further exploited by the EST teacher when teaching students how to write EST reports. With the positive impact which this approach provides, the Malaysian government is more confident of producing human capital that is able to write technical and scientific reports that adhere to universal writing conventions. It is greatly hoped that Malaysia's Vision 2020 of producing a technologically literate and critically thinking workforce can be achieved.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter will review the literature on the role and status of the English Language in Malaysia, the school curriculum with reference to the English language and the purpose for the research.

### 1.1 Background of the study

Under Article 12 of the Federal Constitution, the right to education is one of the fundamental liberties to which every Malaysian citizen is entitled. In order to show the importance of education to the Malaysian government, education is a federal government matter as provided in Item 13 of the Federal List. (*A Project on Copyright and Access to Knowledge Country Study – Malaysia.*) The literacy rate for Malaysians aged 10 years and above in 2005 is at 92% while the literacy rate for Malaysians, aged from five to nine, is at 75%. Furthermore, the expenditure on education and the training sector has always been high, especially as Malaysia moves towards a knowledge-based economy and the realization to be a developed country by the year 2020. A sum of RM 7,291 million has been spent for education and training in 2007, of which out of the total expenditure on developing Malaysia, 17.84% has been spent on the education sector. For 2008, the government continued to allocate huge sums for the education sector to ensure its continuous development. It is hoped that Malaysia will produce citizens with First World mentality, first-class human capital and world-class education institutions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter will review the literature on the language theories related to writing, writing in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) setting and the genre-based approach to writing. The chapter begins with an overview of the language theories related to scientific writing in an English as a Second Language (ESL) and writing for ESP. The major part of the chapter is devoted to the background for the development of the genre-based approach to writing.

The chapter also provides the educational theory that underpins the genre-based approach as this theory is applied in a secondary school setting. Discussion of the three distinct adaptations of the genre approach to writing, namely, the English for Specific Purpose (ESP), the Australian genre-based educational linguistics and the North American New Rhetorical studies, will be examined by looking at the similarities and differences of their conceptualisation of the notion 'genre'.

#### **2.1 Language theories related to scientific writing in English**

The traditional view of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) writing focuses on the sentence level is concerned with grammatical accuracy. It stresses the learning of rules and formal structures of traditional grammar which inevitably applies a teacher-centred approach to teaching writing. The range of text types is limited to