Teaching texts as genres in the second language classroom

CERCLL Workshop, Day 2
Tuscon, AZ

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Review of Day 1

• Why a text-based approach to L2 learning
• Genre and genre analysis
• Selecting and sequencing texts/genres

→ Independent genre analysis before pedagogical treatment
Overview of Day 2

• Discussion of homework
• Genre-based pedagogy
• Genre-based tasks and assessment
• Applications to own program
Discussion of homework

“For our country” & Mr. Summer’s Story

• Purpose and context
• Field
• Tenor
• Mode
• Curricular placement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>For our country</th>
<th>Mr. Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To appeal/call for action</td>
<td>To recount an unexpected event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field</strong></td>
<td>Mixture of concrete and abstract participants; nominalization of material</td>
<td>Concrete participants; material processes to describe weather; mental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>processes; relational processes to show problem; lexical focus on change;</td>
<td>processes to capture reaction to storm and Mr. Summer; verbal processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative lexis for problem; positive lexis for solution</td>
<td>for dialogue; adjectives, comparisons, metaphors to describe weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenor</strong></td>
<td>Negative evaluation of problem; positive evaluation of solution; solidarity</td>
<td>Personal interjections; rich lexis to describe weather; direct speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through 1st person plural; urgency through imperative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>Affected citizens, characteristics of 2 sides; urgency thematized</td>
<td>Characters, weather, time, Mr. Summer thematized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Genre-based pedagogy
Sociocultural theory of learning

• Scaffolding
• Modelling
• Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)
• The Teaching-Learning Dialectic (Lantolf, 2000)
Genre-based pedagogy
(Rothery, 1996)

1. Negotiation of topic of text
   – What we already know and what we still need to know

2. Guided instruction in identifying …
   – Purpose, users (cultural context)
   – Register (situational context)
   – Schematic structure - stages & their communicative function
   – Linguistic realization

3. Independent construction of new text, including challenging ideology and practices inherent to the genre
Theme-based pedagogy as a pedagogy of multiliteracies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre-based pedagogy</th>
<th>Pedagogy of multiliteracies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation of topic of text</td>
<td>Situated practice – “weaving” between learners’ experience &amp; school learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided instruction in identifying moves &amp; linguistic realization of register</td>
<td>Overt instruction – development of a metalanguage to describe meaning making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging ideology and practices inherent to the genre</td>
<td>Critical framing – analysis of text’s purpose and critical interrogation of users’ interests in the communication process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent construction of new text</td>
<td>Transformed practice – production and use of own texts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Genre-based pedagogy

1. Negotiation of topic of text → What we already know and what we still need to know (i.e., situated practice)
   - Learners’ experience with the topic
   - Examination of relevant photos
   - Discussion of socio-historical context
   - Examination of title

   → Possible approaches with sample texts?
Genre-based pedagogy

2. Guided instruction in identifying purpose, author, and audience/users

→ Possible approaches with sample texts?
Genre-based pedagogy

2. Guided instruction in identifying moves & linguistic realization of register (i.e., overt instruction)
   - Matrix: “a grid for identifying a particular perspective and logical system for information available in any genre, … a tool for flexible pedagogical and curricular design” (Swaffar 2004, p. 38)
     - Focuses learners on patterns and message system for presenting content
     - Focuses learners’ attention on the major episodic structure
     - Empowers L2 learners by providing them with guidance for reading, structures that would help them avoid word-word, translation techniques as they read
Matrix 1: Personal Recount

Focus on chronology of events in “Our first foraging outing”
Recreate the chronology of the events by filling in the table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moves</th>
<th>Markers of time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>In the winter of 1946/47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of events</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>There were sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When it got dark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After an extensive breakfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At night</td>
<td>We reached the town of Hammikeln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reorientation</td>
<td>Only after the currency reform on June 20, 1948</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matrix 2: Personal Recount

Focus on expressions of emotion in “Our first foraging outing”
Indicate the emotions that Mr. Schulz expresses and the language he uses to convey those feelings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moves</th>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Linguistic realization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Frustration, anguish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Record of events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gratitude</th>
<th>After an extensive breakfast we headed out full of thanks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Reorientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pride</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Matrix 3: Personal Recount

The contrasts in the text in “Our first foraging outing”
Find examples in the text of both positive and negative moments for the narrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>got nothing</td>
<td>a real meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from farm to farm</td>
<td>being called in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>light in the kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bitter cold</td>
<td>warmed up with hot drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we got to the counter, it was sold out</td>
<td>When we got home, we proudly gave our parents a few items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matrix 4: Historical account

Focus on causation in “Postwar years in Germany”
Identify the cause and effect of different historical events. Also, specify the linguistic device used to express causation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Causal structure</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unavailability of supplies</td>
<td>caused</td>
<td>emergency situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency situation</td>
<td>such that</td>
<td>flourishing black market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of supplies</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>The old and sick suffered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matrix 5: Political appeal

Focus on the different political scenarios in “For our Country”
Fill in the table with language from the text used to portray each of the political contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former East</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>New East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The way we lived before, we cannot</td>
<td>Powerful economic forces</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and no longer want to live</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The leadership of one party</td>
<td></td>
<td>Solidarity, peace, social justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assumed control over the people</td>
<td>Unacceptable conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalinistic structures</td>
<td>Selling off of material and moral values</td>
<td>Antifascist and humanistic ideals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penetrated into all areas of life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Genre-based pedagogy

2. Guided instruction in challenging ideology and practices inherent to the genre (i.e., critical framing) → analysis of text’s purpose and critical interrogation of users’ interests in the communication process

- “Foraging” text (personal recount): Examine context and site of its publication:
  - When was it published? What was the political climate in Germany at the time?
  - For whom was it published?
- “Postwar years” text (historical account): Examine the perspective from which the text was written:
  - How is the West portrayed? How is the East portrayed? Identify language used to refer to both
3. Independent construction of new text (i.e., transformed practice)

- “Foraging” text (personal recount): *Retell the story from the perspective of the parents. Where is the new perspective most evident in the retelling of the events?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects to keep</th>
<th>New aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reorientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- “For our country” text (political appeal): *Rewrite the appeal from a West German perspective*
Text didacticization:

Mr. Summer’s Story
Break
Pedagogical Practice

1. Teacher’s own text analysis
2. Situated practice to contextualize text’s topic
3. Matrix to highlight how the text means
4. Critical framing and/or transformed practice
5. Task-based performance and assessment
Assessment
Genre-based tasks

Characteristics:
- Modeled on pedagogically treated texts → further scaffolding of student learning of content and language
- Conceptualized to elicit language features targeted in instruction
- Contextualized culturally and situationally
- Presented with clear guidelines and assessment criteria
- Produced independently (spoken or written)
Genre-based task construction

• Genre
  – What is the communicative purpose of the text students are asked to produce? What is the context? Who is the audience? What discourse role does the student take on (i.e., tenor)? What is the role of language (i.e., mode)?
  – What is the generic structure/stages for achieving the communicative purpose?

• Content
  – What are the necessary content points that help fill the structure that students need to address (i.e., field)?

• Language: What are the language features that are in focus?
  – At the discourse level? Linguistic realizations of the discourse structure: e.g., through certain discourse markers; sentence types, the linking of sentences
  – At the sentence level? Conjugation, word order, case, etc.
  – At the lexicogrammatical level? Use of specific lexical items and collocations that are topic-appropriate and possibly were discussed prior in class
Pedagogical issues in the construction of genre-based tasks

• How would the context, purpose, linguistic features relate to the content that students have been engaged with through unit materials?

• Have students been sufficiently engaged with the field/topic and its linguistic realizations necessary for the task?

• Are they prepared to construct a particular relationship with the audience through interpersonal strategies (e.g., use of informal vs. formal form of address, use of imperatives or modal verbs, explicit attitude vs. implicit attitude, etc.)?

• What is the process for task completion? How many drafts? If oral presentation: produced with the visuals, spoken freely etc.
Writing task

- Curricular context: Unit on migration in second-year German
- Genre: Personal recount as part of oral history project for local *Vertriebenenverband* (organization of post-war refugees)
- Content: Experience of parent with younger children on the move at war’s end
- Language
  - Adverbs of time to connect events chronologically
  - Construal of events through material processes
  - Thematization of people, temporal and spatial elements
  - Attitudinal lexis to indicate emotional response
- Process: Multiple drafts
Speaking task

• Curricular context: Unit on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (= coming to terms with the past) in fourth-year German
• Genre: Debate
• Content: 1945 was “Year Zero” for Germany: Pro und Contra
• Language:
  – Relational processes for stating thesis, evidence
  – Temporal phrases to situate events
  – Causal links between events and their causes/consequences
  – Nominalization of causes and events
  – Evaluation through judgment and appreciation
  – Rhetorical devices for agreement & disagreement
• Process: One notecard allowed
Development of additional genre-based tasks based on sample texts
Lunch
Summary: Genre in a FL program

→ Possibility of organizing entire language programs on the basis of textual genre, both oral and written, to achieve upper levels of ability in an articulated curriculum

• From the pedagogical perspective, a genre approach helps define the nature and focus of pedagogical practices and specify the tasks teachers guide and students perform.

• From the assessment perspective, genre-based pedagogical tasks readily translate into assessment tasks with high validity and high potential for feedback into curriculum and instruction.

• From the curricular standpoint, textual genre can motivate decisions for selecting and sequencing materials across longer instructional sequences, thereby contributing to articulation across instructional levels.
Next steps programmatically

- Seek departmental consensus
- Identity possible starting points for curricular work → “weak spots”
- Remain realistic; start small
- Share experiences
- Document work and performances
- Establish commonly held practices and shared beliefs within program
Work within own programmatic context

• Identity possible starting point for curricular work → “weak spots”
  – Select text to model and to serve as basis for language-based content instruction
  – Analyze text according to genre-based principles
  – Develop pedagogical treatment, including assessment item
Presentation of pedagogical treatment
Looking ahead

Concerns?
Questions?
Plans?
Works cited

Thank you

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