

A Genre Analysis of Textbook Discourse

-- A Case Study of A Travel Journal from Unit 3 Book 3 for Senior High by People's Education Press

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Abstract: As one of the suggestions on teaching specified in New Curriculum Standard is studying the texts thoroughly and grasping the core teaching content. As part of the curriculum content, text types which fulfil specific social purposes are used to specify what students should be able to achieve with language if they are to meet the stated outcomes of the syllabus. When texts share the same general purpose in the culture, they will often share the same obligatory and optional structural elements and so they belong to the same genre or text type. Then it's much easier to produce an appropriate text when you know its structure, and for this reason awareness of text types is now part of the curriculum. This study, selecting the reading material for senior high school students: A Travel Journal from Unit 3 Book 3 published by People's Education Press, analyzing the structural elements in this text based on Martin's genre analysis in the Sydney School, concludes that, to facilitate the cultivation of students' core literacy, teachers are advised to try to answer three fundamental questions of "what, why and how" during text analysis and teaching design, which are consistent with field, tenor and mode from Halliday's (1978) Register Theory respectively and can be answered by considering the genre and three meta-functions of language including ideational, interpersonal and textual, which is achieved by transitivity system, voice, polarity; mood, modality system; theme-rheme structure, information structure and textual cohesion.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis; Genre Analysis; Textbook Discourse; The Sydney School.

1. Introduction

The General Senior High School Curriculum Standard (2020) (GSHSCS, 2020) points out that the content of the English curriculum is the basis for developing students' core competences, which consists of six components: thematic contexts, text types, language knowledge, cultural knowledge, language skills, and learning strategies. Among them, texts carry language knowledge and cultural knowledge. Being exposed to various types of texts, grasping the common text types in life, and mastering the content structures, stylistic features, and linguistic characteristics of different texts can not only help students deepen their understanding of the texts, but also help them use different types of texts for effective communication (Ministry of Education, 2020). Textbook provides students with various genres of texts which can help them build systematic knowledge and develop core competences. They are an important part of textbook analysis and teaching design. Foreign Language teachers need to apply effective approaches like genre-based approach to guide students to develop an awareness of text types and the ability to produce a certain type of text to fulfill a specific purpose, to use language appropriately by considering the extralinguistic context of the language they are learning. And foreign Language teachers are supposed to develop the competence of analyzing textbooks or teaching materials first. This study, selecting the reading material for senior high school students: *A Travel Journal* from Unit 3 Book 3 published by People's Education Press, analyzes the structural elements in this text based on Martin's genre analysis in the Sydney School, aiming to help language teachers improve text analysis, teaching design, teaching effectiveness and facilitate students' subject core competence.

2. An Overview of Genre Analysis

2.1. The Definition of Genre

Genres are ways in which people "get things done" through their use of spoken and written discourse. Genres are activities that people engage in through the use of language. Academic lectures and casual conversations are examples of spoken genres. Newspaper reports and academic essays are examples of written genres. Instances of a genre often share a number of features. They often have a common function and purpose. Genres may typically be performed by a particular person, aimed at a particular audience in a particular context about a certain topic. Genres change through time. This may, for example, be in response to changes in technologies or it may be as a result of changes in values underlying the use of the particular genre.

Different schools of genre analysis hold various views on the definition of genre. Martin's (1984: 25) definition of genre as "a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture" has been extremely influential in the work of the Sydney School of genre analysis. Swales (2004: 61) from the field of English for specific purposes says he prefers the notion of "metaphor" for talking about genres, rather than "definition", saying that definitions are often not "true in all possible worlds and all possible times" and can "prevent us from seeing newly explored or newly emerging genres for what they really are". Miller's (1984) notion of "genre as social action" has been especially important in the area known as *rhetorical genre studies* (Artemeva, 2008; Schryer, 2011). In this view, a genre is defined, not in terms of "the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (Miller, 1984: 151). This action is recognized by other people and the

genre is accepted, over time, as a way of doing something. Genre, thus, is a kind of “social agreement” (Miller & Bazerman, 2011) about ways of doing things with language in particular social and cultural settings. Miller also discusses the notion of “typification” in relation to genre. That is, there are typical forms a genre might take as well as typical content and typical action that the genre performs, all of which we recognize and draw on as we engage with the use of genres.

2.2. Register and Genre Analysis

According to Wang Zongyan (1988: 321), the concept of register usually includes two senses at the beginning: one is the general language style, such as formal language (such as laws and regulations, judicial documents) and informal language (such as shopping in stores, friends talk); the second is a particular variety of language used by a particular group of people with a common occupation or interest (such as academic papers, product brochures, news items), which is now known as the genre. Since the study of genre gradually attracted attention in the field of linguistics, many scholars (such as Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993) suggested that the concept of “genre” should be liberated from the concept of “register”, because the latter is put forward from the perspective of the social situation of language use, and the research focus is on the description of the lexical and grammatical levels of language varieties, but fails to explain why particular genres have their particular patterns of discourse structure (Bhatia 1993:6).

Regarding the relationship between genre and register, Swales (1990) argues that genre is a linguistically realized activity type, and “genre” is realized through “register”; the “register” is reflected by the “style of language use”. The register shows its binding force at lexical and syntactic levels; genre plays a restrictive role in discourse structure. Different from register, genre can only be reflected in a relatively complete discourse. Therefore, in the analysis of language use, it is not enough to consider the register, but also the communicative purpose that communicators expect to achieve when they communicate in specific social situations

(Ventola, 1995). The genre analysis of discourse can not only tell people what steps to take to achieve the communicative goal, but also the specific language they should use in the process of achieving the communicative purpose (Du, 2013: 160).

2.3. The Sydney School of Genre Analysis

The notion of genre is important in the teaching of writing and reading (Martin and Rose, 2008; Rose, 2012; Rose and Martin, 2012) in the work of the Sydney School of genre studies. Here, the term “schematic structure” is often used to describe the discourse structure of texts. For Martin, the notion of genre corresponds to Malinowski's notion of context of culture and is responsible for the schematic structure of a text. The register (Halliday, 1989c) of the text, on the other hand, corresponds to Malinowski's context of situation and is responsible for the language features of a text. Genres, thus, are culture specific and have particular purposes, stages and linguistic features associated with them, the meanings of which need to be interpreted in relation to the cultural and social contexts in which they occur. And when texts share the same context of situation to a greater or lesser extent, they will share the same experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings and so they belong to the same register. Because texts belonging to the same register have meanings in common, they also share patterns of lexicogrammar. This knowledge is very useful for creating our own texts. It is easier to produce a text of a certain type when you know the grammatical patterns to use. Considering the purpose of guiding language teachers conduct text analysis and teaching design to facilitate the cultivation of students' core literacy, this study adopted Martin's genre analysis in the Sydney School to analyze the recount *A Travel Journal* from Unit 3 Book 3 published by People's Education Press,

3. Genre Analysis of Textbook Discourse

Table 1. Recount: *A Travel Journal*

Structural elements	Text
Orientation • information about who and where	Para 1: Today was my first day back in San Francisco after camping in the Redwood Forest and visiting the wine country of Napa Valley. I have to admit that it definitely feels good to be back in the city again. And what a city—a city that was able to rebuild itself after the earthquake that occurred in 1906. There are so many beautiful old buildings—many sitting on top of big hills, offering great views of the city, the ocean, and the Golden Gate Bridge.
Record of events • in the order in which they occurred	Para 1: Today was my first day back in San Francisco after camping in the Redwood Forest and visiting the wine country of Napa Valley. Para 2: In the morning, I walked around in the Mission District looking at the street art and ate some delicious Mexican-Chinese noodles. Para 3: In the afternoon, I headed to a local museum that showed the historical changes in California. Para 4: This evening, I went to Chinatown. I selected a Cantonese restaurant that served its food on beautiful China plates.
Reorientation • rounding off the sequence of events	Para 5: That's enough for today. Tomorrow evening, I'm going to a jazz bar in the Richmond District. Can't wait!
Coda • personal evaluation	Para 1: I have to admit that it definitely feels good to be back in the city again. And what a city- a city that was able to rebuild itself after the earthquake that occurred in 1906. Para 2: It was quite modern and lively. A real mix of cultures here! Para 3: The museum did a really good job of showing how America was built by immigrants from different countries and cultures. Para 4: What great food! Para 5: Can't wait!

When texts share the same general purpose in the culture,

they will often share the same obligatory and optional

structural elements and so they belong to the same genre or text type. It's certainly much easier to produce an appropriate text when you know its structure, and for this reason awareness of text types is now part of the curriculum in some schools (Butt & David, 1950). Different text types can achieve different social purposes to which human activities are closely related. For instance, Narrative is mainly written for entertainment or instruction and Discussion is to explore different perspectives of an issue before coming to a decision.

This is a travel journal written by Li Lan, who recorded what she saw, heard, did and how she felt after she visited several famous places in San Francisco. It belongs to the text type of Recount, whose structural elements include orientation, record of events, reorientation and coda. And its purpose is to tell what happened, to document a sequence of events and evaluate their significance in some way. Regarding the purpose of helping teachers conduct text analysis, formulate teaching content and purposes, finish teaching design and practice genre-based approach, the genre analysis is finished based on Martin's genre analysis theory, the Sydney School of genre analysis, which belongs to the scope of systematic functional linguistics, highlighting both register (situational contexts or metalanguage) and genre (cultural contexts or communicative purposes) analysis.

First, in terms of its Orientation, the author stated it clearly that this journal is about herself (the participant) by applying the adjectival possessive pronoun "my" and the first personal pronoun "I" in the first paragraph. And the prepositional phrase "in San Francisco" is adopted to set the environmental background.

Second, with regard to Record of events, the author presented those events in a time order. In the first paragraph, we can see that the author uses the noun "today" which signifies the concept of time, the ordinal numeral "first" which can denote orders, and the time preposition "after" to make her composition orderly and logically. And in the following four paragraphs, the author applies four prepositional phrases "in the morning, in the afternoon, this evening, tomorrow evening" that specify the time order to achieve cohesion and unity. About the major events, the author described them explicitly by applying many material processes of transitivity system, including the past tense form of notional verbs such as "walked around, ate, went to, headed to, selected". It's necessary to mention the theme-rheme structure, mainly the pattern of theme identity, which helps readers understand the order and logic of this travel journal.

Third, considering Reorientation, the author ended her journal by referring to the former contents and pointing to the plans for tomorrow. She gave a review of events which happened today and aroused readers' expectation. To achieve the first textual effect, the author uses a cohesive device of anaphora, the demonstrative pronoun "that" to round off the sequence of events for today. Also, the adjective "enough" means "as many as needed". With this adjective in a relational process, which functions as stating somebody or something's property and condition, or a certain relationship between them, the author is telling us "the descriptions above about those events are enough; I have written down almost all the information related and I am going to finish it". As for the second textual effect, the author applies the grammatical form "be going to +verb" to tell us her plans for the events or activities she will engage in tomorrow. In the meantime, the author uses an elliptical sentence "can't wait!" with exclamatory mood, which achieves the interpersonal meaning

and expresses her feelings of excitement and expectation.

Finally, as for the Coda part, the author stated her feelings and views toward each place she went to in each paragraph by adopting relational and psychological processes. In the first paragraph, she uses two psychological verbs "admit" and "feel" which can describe someone's psychological activities and signify his or her opinions and attitudes. The structure that the adjective "good" following the copula "feel" can express the author's positive feelings. And the exclamatory mood "what a city" can express the author's appreciation and respect for the city San Francisco. In the second, fourth, and fifth paragraph, the author applies exclamatory mood three times to show her opinion of thinking San Francisco as a city of diverse cultures, compliment of the food and excited expectation for tomorrow's journey respectively. Those three expressions are "A real mix of cultures here!", "What great food!", "Can't wait!". And the first expression is a noun phrase instead of a complete sentence. The second is an exclamatory sentence and the last an elliptical sentence. It's worth mentioning that in the second paragraph, the author also uses a relational process or sentence pattern "subject-linking verb-predicative", "It was quite modern and lively" to describe the properties of street art and the adjectives "modern and lively" to express her positive evaluation of the street art. The adjective "good" in the sentence "The museum did a really good job of showing..." from the third paragraph also expresses the author's praise for the museum in San Francisco.

4. Findings and Discussion

Foreign language teachers should guide students to use language appropriately, namely to use functions of language to achieve their purposes. As one of the suggestions on teaching specified in New Curriculum Standard is studying the texts thoroughly and grasping the core teaching content. Teachers are advised to try to answer three basic questions. First, what are the theme and content of the text? This is a question of "what". Second, what is the deep meaning of the text? In other words, what are the author or speaker's intentions, emotions, attitudes and value orientation? This is a question of "why". Third, what kind of stylistic features, content structure, and language characteristics does the text have in order to properly express the thematic meaning? Those three "what, why, and how" questions are consistent with field, tenor and mode respectively, which can be answered via Martin's genre analysis in the Sydney School.

In addition, considering its stylistic features, on the macro characteristics, each paragraph is related with the theme of the whole unit, diverse cultures. The author described her feelings and attitudes toward what she saw and heard each time she went to a place. And by introducing the mixed style of buildings, art, food, music of those famous places in this city, the author expressed her intentions of showing readers the cultural diversities in San Francisco. The whole passage consists of five paragraphs, and each paragraph is arranged orderly and logically with time prepositions or nouns. On the micro characteristics, sentence patterns are various. Simple sentences are used to describe what the author did. Compound sentences are applied to describe the author's evaluations. Special sentences like exclamatory and elliptical sentences are adopted to express the author's emotions. Regarding the language characteristics, this passage is filled with past tense forms to record the events. And many adjectives are applied to express the author's evaluations and emotions. And the

vocabularies are not so difficult since the contents are from foreign references. By applying those language forms, stylistic features and content structure, the author can achieve her intention of showing readers the beauty of cultural diversities in San Francisco.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the genre or communicative purpose of a text is achieved by register, including the three aspects of field, tenor and mode of situational context from Systemic Functional Grammar, which is realized by the three meta-functions of language including ideational, interpersonal and textual, which is achieved by transitivity system, voice, polarity; mood, modality system; theme-rheme structure, information structure and textual cohesion. Foreign language teachers should keep learning linguistics to guide their teaching practice. This case study of genre analysis to textbook discourse is conducted under the Sydney School, future researches can adopt Rhetorical or English for specific purposes to analyze and appreciate from different perspectives according to specific research objectives.

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