

GENRE BASED APPROACH FOR TECAHING ESL AND EFL WRITING: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

In the last decade, the usage of genre-based approaches (GBAs) has proliferated especially in the English education sector. This article presents an analysis of a systematic review based on published studies on the genre-based approach (GBA) in teaching writing. It aims synthesize current research findings on the implementation and effectiveness of GBA, to show how GBA enhances students' writing skill, as well as the research trends related to GBA in teaching ESL/EFL writing. Using databases such as Scopus, ERIC, Francis & Taylor, google Scholar, etc., studies published from 2019-2025 with a total of twenty studies. This review used thematic analysis to categorize the main themes that emerge in the selected studies. The review reveals that GBA significantly enhances learners' genre awareness, textual organization, and communicative competence through explicit instruction and scaffold learning stages. However, it also identifies major challenges, including limited teacher knowledge of genre theory, lack of institutional support, and contextual constraints in exam-oriented curricula. Overall, this review confirms that GBA is an effective and contextually adaptable framework for developing writing proficiency in ESL/EFL classrooms, while also highlighting the need for further longitudinal and technology-integrated studies to strengthen its pedagogical application.

Key Words: genre-based approach, teaching writing, systematic literature review

1. Introduction

Writing is a fundamental skill in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. It remains a foundation of English education, construction used for support in global knowledge production, professional communication, and participation in global knowledge production (Fatjriya et al., 2021; Kitajroonchai et al., 2022; Syahrin et al., 2025). Despite extensive curricular

attention, many learners continue to face challenges in with organizing ideas, controlling register, producing coherent, structured, and contextually appropriate texts for specific communicative purposes (Kondal, 2020). These existing challenges suggest a need for pedagogical approaches that move beyond sentence-level accuracy to explicitly teach how text work as social action.

The Genre-Based Approach (GBA), grounded in Systematic Functional Linguistics, has gained increasing attention as an effective (Fan, 2023; Rachawong & Phusawisot, 2025; Wardhana, 2022a) pedagogical framework that emphasizes the social purpose, structure, and linguistic features of various text types (Hoa, 2022; Y, 2022). It addresses this need by representation the relationship between context, purpose, and textual organization. Rather than treating writing as a decontextualized skill, GBA models how meaning is realized through recurrent stages of a genre (e.g., orientation, complication, resolution in narratives; move structures in research articles) and the linguistics resources that enact those stages. Through explicit instruction and scaffolded cycles of modeling, joint construction, and independent construction (He, 2022; L. I. U. Lin, 2024a; Rachmani et al., 2025; Syahrin et al., 2025), learners develop genre awareness and control of the language features that realize communicative goals (Ariyanfar, 2020; Dzukhriyah & Rini, 2023).

Traditional product and process-oriented pedagogies have contributed valuable insight such as giving attention to model texts, drafting, and feedback but they often provide limited guidance on how rhetorical purposes map onto textual stages and language choices (Dai, 2024; Mark Shiu-kee Shum, Dan Shi, Xian-hang Huang, Chung-pui Tai, 2019). GBA complements and extends these traditions by making the discourse-semantic architecture

emphasizes specific text types (Pourdana, 2022; Zebua & Rozimela, 2020) such as argumentative essay, report, this explicitness is particularly consequential for equitable access to valued forms of writing.

Over the past decade, research on GBA in ESL/EFL contexts has expanded across regions, proficiency levels, and educational settings (Piriya Thaksanan, 2021). Studies have investigated outcomes such as coherence, cohesion, lexical-grammatical control, and stance-taking, as well as affective variables like confidence and participation (L. I. U. Lin, 2024b). At the same time, the field reports implementation challenges: uneven teacher knowledge of genre theory (Liu et al., 2024), limited curricular time (Heron & Corradini, 2023), scarcity of contextually appropriate materials (Sukmawati & Nasution, 2020a), and tensions with exam-oriented or prescriptive syllabi. These mixed conditions warrant a systematic appraisal of what GBA achieves, under which conditions and with what forms of support.

A systematic literature review (SLR) offers a rigorous way to synthesize this dispersed evidence, identify convergent findings, and surface contradictions or underexplored areas (Aulia, 2024). By applying transparent search, screening, and analysis procedures, an SLR can map research trends such as geographic concentration, educational level, compare methodological quality, and distill pedagogical implications that are transferable across context (He, 2022; Lianjiang Jiang, Shulin Yu, 2022;

Pourdana, 2022). It can also clarify how GBA interacts with complementary approaches such as task-based learning, digital writing pedagogy, and multimodal composition.

Accordingly, this review pursues three aims: (1) to identify trends and themes in previous studies on GBA for ESL/EFL writing; (2) to evaluate the effectiveness of GBA in improving students' writing skills; (3) to explore challenges and gaps in current GBA-related research.

2. Method

This study employs Systematic Literature Review; that is an objective, systematic, transparent, and replicable technique that provides a comprehensive overview of existing literature related to specific research focus, and questions and presents and synthesizes findings (Mallet, 2012).

For collecting the data, the article confined the selection of studies to recent research reports on GBA in teaching writing context in national and international journals of the last 7 years (2019-2025) to ensure the sample and represented current work within a strict time frame. This article focused on the journal (research articles), Journal (SLR)/ review papers, and conference proceedings. However, to conduct a systematic review of genre-based approach in teaching writing, the researcher followed a systematic process of planning, searching and selecting, evaluating (extracting), and synthesizing (executing) relevant studies (Mallet, 2012). Figure 6 shows the method in the study of literature adapted from Guidelines Systematic Literature Review.

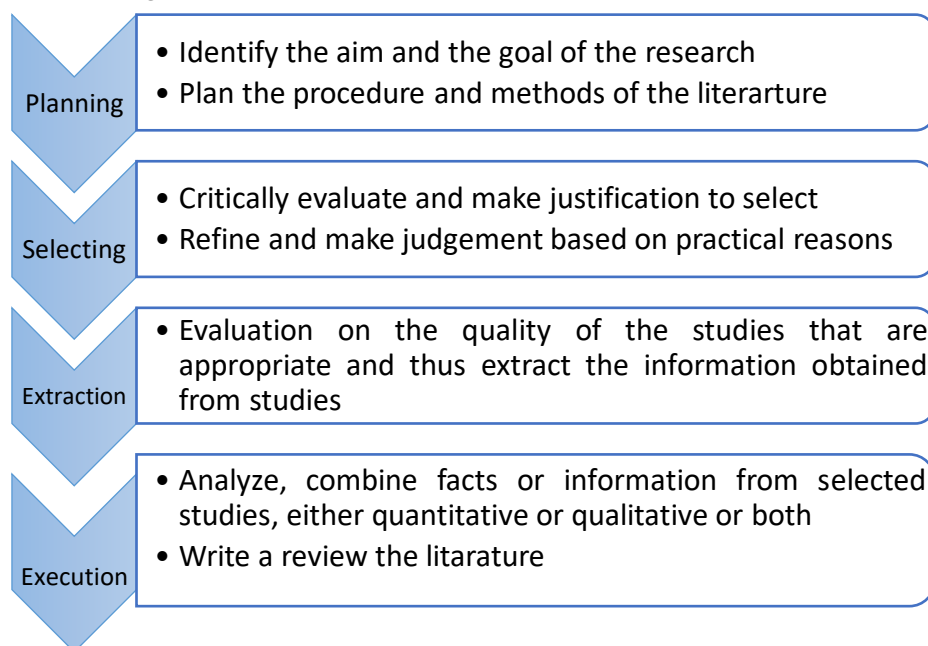


Figure 6 Learning Cycle
[Source: Okali & Schabram, 2010]

First, the identification of the research objectives was done. The next step was finding reputable database such as ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis Online, Elsevier, SAGE Publication, Springer, and JSTOR to search for excluded and included articles published. Considering that there are very few studies that directly and specifically focus on teaching writing compared to those that focus on teaching English skill in general, we searched for many based on the following domains (keywords) and phrases: General Terms: Genre-Based Approach in Teaching Writing, Genre-Based Approach in Second Language Writing, Genre-Based Approach in Foreign Language Writing, Genre Based Pedagogy in writing, Genre-Based instruction in Writing. After that, we screened the title and abstracts of the retrieved articles to exclude those that did not meet the inclusion criteria,

which were: a) focusing on the genre-based approach in teaching writing, b) reporting empirical data on the effectiveness of the approach, c) being written in English and d) being published in a peer-reviewed journal from 2019 to 2025. By limiting the timeframe of this review to the past ten years, this review aims to capture the latest developments and innovation in the application of GBA for teaching writing and reflect contemporary educational needs and current priorities, ensuring that the review address the most pressing issues faced by educators and learners today. Further more, based on our search results for related articles, we found approximately 1000 articles. After screening based on titles and abstracts, about 700 articles were excluded. Further screening based on abstracts, conclusion, and full texts revealed that 50 articles were not relevant, leaving only 20 articles suitable for analysis (see figure 7).

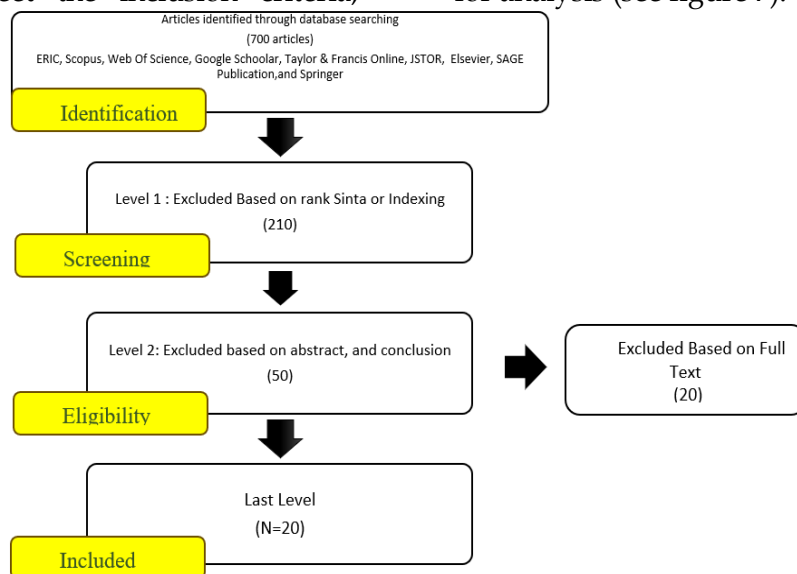


Figure 7 The PRISMA flow diagram of the Inclusion/ Exclusion technique used in the systematic review
[Source: Okali & Schabram, 2010]

Table 16 Including and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1. Must use Genre-Based Approach in teaching writing	1. Genre-Based Approach were not used in teaching writing
2. Must be empirical research	2. Not-empirical research
3. Published on the year 2019-2025	3. Not published on the year 2019-2025
4. Publish in Sinta 1 dan Index International	4. Publish in Sinta 1 dan Index International
5. Written in English	5. Not written in English

After that, the full texts of the remaining articles (20) to further assess their suitability were checked. Then, the summary of the characteristics of the selected studies was displayed in a table, including information such as the authors, the year of publication, the research design, the participant, the intervention, the outcome measures, and the main findings of each study. Third, we extracted the relevant data from each study using a standardized form, such as research questions, the theoretical framework, the data collection and analysis methods, the results, the discussion, the implications, and the limitations. Fourth, we analyzed and synthesized the data from the selected studies using six stages was crucial for gaining a deep understanding of the material. In the

second phases, we used the text highlight Color feature to mark important points and generate initial codes, identifying significant statements and segments relevant to our research question. In the third phase, we generate themes from these highlighted codes by grouping related codes to form broader themes that captured the essence of the data. In the phase four, we reviewed, evaluated, and modified the themes as necessary to ensure they accurately represented the data and were coherent and distinct. In the fifth stage, we refined the themes through in-depth discussions, gaining different perspectives and insight to finalize the themes. Finally, in phase six, we presented the final themes in the review report.

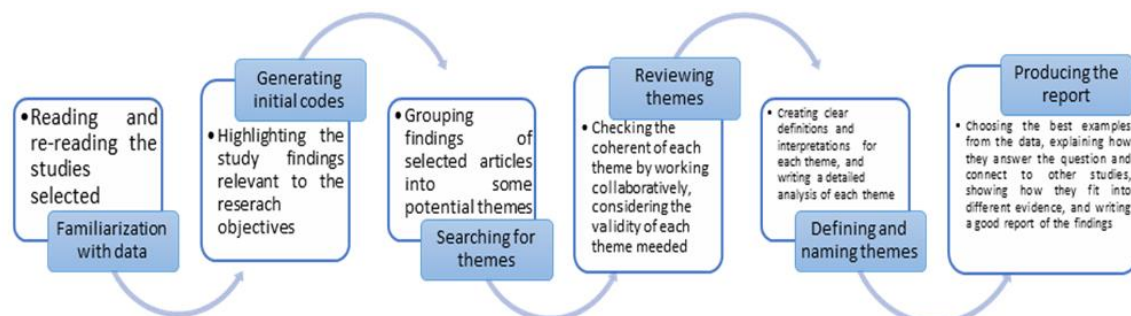


Figure 8 Thematic Analysis Phases
[Source: Braun & Clarke, 2006]

3. Findings and Discussion

From 700 sources, it was identified 20 studies for analysis. Table 17 shows 20 studies, published between 2019-2025, related to the Genre-Based Approach in teaching writing context. The studies are organized and coded

into the following different fields: author and year of publication, the study types, journals context (or location), and result. The order of presentation of each study in Table 17 follows the order of largest to smallest year of publication used for analysis.

Table 17 Overview of the Studies Selected in appendix

No.	Author, Year of Publication, and Title	Study Types	Journal Context/ Location	Result
1.	Wang, X., et al, 2025 A Systematic Literature Review of Genre approach in EFL Writing Teaching in China: From Theory to Practice	SLR	Language Teaching Research Quarterly: LTRQ, Turkey	This study strives to conduct a SLR of GBA in EFL writing teaching in China on basis of 25 articles collected from Chinese core periodicals in CNKI, Wanfang and CQVIP databases. In terms of research status from 2001 to 2022 theoretical and empirical studies on Genre based had comprehensively explored a wide range of educational context and genres.
2.	Alhammad, A. I., 2025 Implementing a Genre -Based Approach Enhance Essay Writing Skills in Saudi EFL Learners	Quantitative	Journal of Language Teaching and Research, UK	Students reported heightened confidence in utilizing GBA for writing, while teachers displayed a positive disposition toward adopting efficacious methods to enhance writing skills, despite potential gaps in knowledge of recent development in ELT.
3.	Dzuhriyyah, S., et al, 2023 Genre-Based Approach Effectiveness in Writing Descriptive Text	Quantitative	LITE: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya, Indonesia	Research has shown that the features of different genres, students can learn how to use language to achieve specific goals and how to adapt their writing to different context and audiences. Therefore, BGA can be concluded that is an effective method for teaching and improving students' writing skills.
4.	Liu, Y., 2023 The Applications of Genre-Based approach Teaching Method in Senior High School English Writing Teaching	Qualitative	The Educational Review, Hill Publishing, USA	The genre-based approach gives full play to the advantages of the outcome, process and genre teaching methods, both with focus on the application of communicative method in specific writing session, gibing full play to students' initiative and creativity, but also placing writing activities.

5.	Thaksanan, P., et al, 2023 Enhancing EFL Students' Performance and Genre Awareness in Academic Writing Through Genre-Based Instruction	Quantitative	Arab World English Journal, Malaysia	The results of this study showed that the students in the control and experimental group had equal writing abilities, as seen in the pretest. However, the experimental group of students significantly outperformed the students in the control group in all types of academic writing.
6.	Liu, H., et al, 2023 Genre-Based approaches and ESL/EFL Writing: A Review of the Literature	Mixed Method	World Journal of English Language, Canada	There have been significant advancements in GBA and EFL/ESL writing over the past two decades. Th review offers comprehensive insights into the existing research on research article writing, thesis dissertation writing, argumentative writing, and other relevant professional writing.
7.	Zhai, X., et al, 2023 Triple Method Approach to Development of a Genre-Based Approach to Teaching ESL/EFL Writing: A Systematic Literature Review by Bibliometric, Content, and Scient metric Analyses	SLR	Sage Open, UK	The results show that GBA is now widely used in teaching English academic writing to ESL/EFL tertiary/graduate students. The top five countries in the number of paper publication are China, United States, and Japan.
8.	Damayanti, I.L., et al, 2022 Building Knowledge about Language for Teaching IELTS Writing Tasks: A Genre-Based Approach	Qualitative	SIELE Journal: Studies in English Language and Education, Indonesia	As a result of their involvement in the intervention, the participants, including those with low English proficiency, demonstrated their ability to write more coherent texts. This study offered a genre-based teaching model for preparing EFL studnets intending to take English writing test.
9.	He, Y., 2022 Using Genre-Based Approach to Teach Persuasive Netvertisement for English Learners in a Chinese Vocational College	Quantitative	Arab World English Journal, Malaysia	There was a significant increase in Competent writings from pre-tutorial (0%) to post-tutorial writing (68% and 69%) across two iterations.
10.	Ganapathy, M., et al, 2022 The Effect of a Genre-Based Pedagogical approach on <i>Orang</i>	Quasi-Experimental	Malaysian Journal of learning and Instruction, Malaysia	The approach was effective in improving students' descriptive writing and had a more significant effect than the mainstream process-based approach. students

	Asli Students' EFL Writing Performance			reacted positively to the approach as they found it useful in improving their writing skills.
11.	Hoang, T.M., 2022 Impacts of Genre-Based Approach on EFL Sophomores' Writing Performance, Writing Self-Efficacy, Writing Autonomy	Quantitative	Journal of Language & Education, Russia	The results indicated that genre-based approach enhanced the tertiary students' overall writing performance to some extent, empowered their self-efficacy of writing ideation, conventions, self-regulation, and positively reinforced their awareness and behaviors of writing autonomy.
12.	Lubis, A., et al, 2022 The Implementation of Genre Approach on Students' Skill in Writing Anecdote Text at Senior High School	Research & Development	International Journal of Educational Research Excellence (IJERE), Indonesia	The use of genre-based approach anecdotal text in tenth grade of SMK Negeri 1 Batang learning modules is effective because it is suitable with needed by teacher and students in the learning process.
13.	Uday, Y., 2022 Effectiveness of genre Based Approach on Enhancing Creative Writing Skills in English Among Secondary School Students	Quantitative	International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, India	The result revealed that experimental groups "Creative Writing" skills are enhanced than the control group as the result of teaching through Genre -Based Approach. It is recommended for using in different levels of educations like primary, secondary, and higher secondary etc. and it can stimulate students' grammar, subject matter or content etc.
14.	Wardhana, D.E.C., 2022 Exploring the impact of genre-Based Approach on Learners' Academic Writing and Higher Order Thinking Skills	Quantitative	Journal of Language and Education, Russia	Finding have found that genre-based approach had a substantial positive effect on scholarly writing and students HOTS. It can be enrich knowledge about how students enhance their writing ability and HOTS.
15.	Fatjriya, M.H., et al, 2021 The Effects of a Genre-Based Approach and Learning Encouragement on the Writing Achievement of eighth-Grade Students at SMP negeri 3 Air Kumbang	Quantitative	Advanced in Social Science, Educational and Humanities Research, Belanda	The study's finding demonstrated that there was a substantial difference in creative accomplishment for GBA class, and writing achievement between with high learning enthusiasm.

16.	Heron, M., et al, 2020 A Genre-Based Study of Profesional Reflective Writing in Higher Education	Qualitative	Tandfoline Journal, Taylor & Francis, UK	Based on the genre analysis perspective on supporting writing is relevant to all aspects of professional academic writing.
17.	Ariyanfar, S., et al, 2020 Teaching Writing Skills through Genre: Applying the genre-Based Approah in Iran	Qualitative	International Research Journal of Management, IT & Social Science, India	Result shows that teaching GBA can focus on better genre characteristics identification along with improved teaching and learning methodology, combining elements of structure, language, rhetoric, and cultural contextualization and it gives more rapid result, and leads and more confident writers.
18.	Nagao, A., 2019 The SFL Genre-Based Approach to Writing in EFL Contexts	Qualitative	Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, Springer Open, UK	The study has investigated the changes in Japanese EFL learners' awareness of language features and generic structures of "discussion genre texts" through the genre-based approach to text-based writing lessons during a 15-week course. It found that the GBA paired with a sequenced and well-structured teaching methodology can be an effective teaching methodology in writing lessons.
19.	Montero, S.J., 2019 Effects of Genre Based Approach (GBA) In EFL Writing	Quantitative	Gist Education and Learning Research Journal, Colombia	The finding showed that students' writing improved after the implementation of GBA; as a result, the students were able to understand, explain and recreate the genres that were part of the study.
20.	Sinaga, I.S., et al, 2019 Developing English Writing Materials in Narrative text Based on Genre-Based Approach	Research and Development (R & D)	Journal of ALTSA Malaysia	In brief, developing materials English writing using Genre-Based Approach is relevant for the grade XI students at SMA Negeri 14 Medan.

Publication year map, and trend

The study reached its peak in 2022 with 7 articles published. Meanwhile, the lowest study was in 2021 with the number of articles published only one. In addition, the figure 8 shows that the most of the GBA work in teaching

writing has been done in the last 6 years, but increase in its work is not consistent every year due to the fluctuating research productivity.

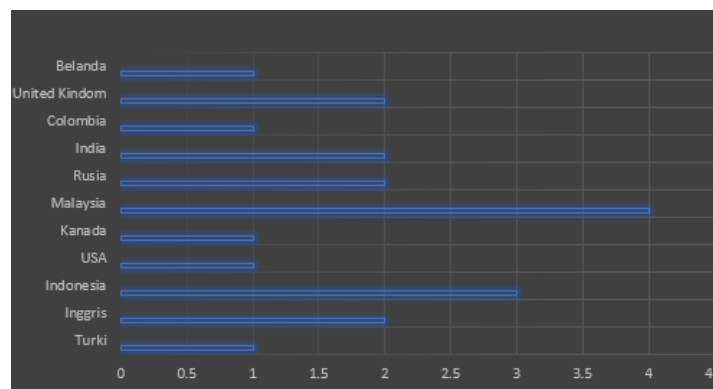


Figure 9. Publication Distribution of the Country

Figure 9 is supported by Alinasab et al (2021), who found that the genre-based writing instruction in non-native English-speaking countries has received insufficient empirical attention. Thus, although the GBA has been used worldwide, their use in L2 writing has not been widespread (Alinasab et al, 2021).

The Effectiveness of GBA in Teaching ESL/EFL Writing

The Genre-Based Approach (GBA) has demonstrated significant effectiveness in enhancing the organization of the texts (Worden, 2019; Zhai & Razali, 2023), linguistic accuracy (Kondal, 2020), and genre awareness among ESL/EFL learners (Wardhana, 2022b; Y, 2022; Zhi, 2024). By explicitly teaching students how texts are structured around social purposes and communicative goals, GBA helps learners understand not only the formal organization of the text (such as the introduction, body, and conclusion in essays) but also how to use appropriate linguistics resources for different text types. This includes recognizing genre-specific features such as the use of specific grammatical

structures, vocabulary, and rhetorical moves that align with the communicative intentions of a particular genre. Through this explicit focus on the function and deform of the texts, GBA helps students gain better control over their writing, leading to more coherent, cohesive and accurate outputs (Fan, 2023).

Moreover, GBA encourages collaboration learning through its distinctive teaching-learning cycle, which involves building knowledge of the field, modeling the text, joint construction of the text, and independent construction of the text (Hyland, 2021; Dai, 2024; Lianjiang Jiang, Shulin Yu, 2022; L. Lin & Arumugam, 2025). In the modeling phase, the teacher provides examples of genre-specific texts, highlighting key structural and linguistics features. This phase is followed by joint construction, where the teacher and students collaborate create a text, engaging in discussion about genre conventions and language choices. Finally, in the independent construction phase, students apply what they are learned by composing their own texts, with less teacher intervention (Zebua & Rozimela,

2020). This cycle promotes an active learning environment, where students gradually gain autonomy in writing while benefiting from peer and teacher collaboration. The scaffolded nature of this approach builds learners; confidence and competence, reinforcing both their cognitive and social engagement in the writing process (Aulia, 2024; Zhang et al., 2023).

When compared to traditional product and process approaches to writing instruction, GBA has shown to produce superior outcomes, especially in terms of the text coherence and the achievement of communicative purpose (Ganapathy et al., 2022). Radiational product approaches often emphasize the final written product, focusing in grammatical correctness and replication of model texts, while process approaches center on staged of drafting and revision. However, these approaches typically overlook the social and contextual factors that shape how a text functions. GBA, by contract, integrates a deeper understanding of the genre's communicative goals, helping students not just to produce well-formed sentences, but also to structure their ideas and language in a way that meets the expectations of a particular discourse community. This focus on genre-specific purposes leads to writing that is not only linguistically accurate but also contextually appropriate and coherent, ultimately fostering better communicative outcomes.

Challenges and Gaps in Current GBA

Despite the many benefits of GBA, there are several challenges to its implementation in ESL/EFL classrooms. One of the most significant barriers is teacher's limited knowledge of Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and genre theory. Since, GBA is grounded in SFL, it requires teachers to have a deep understanding of how language functions within different genres and context. Unfortunately, many ESL/EFL educators are not sufficiently trained in these linguistics theories, which can result in challenges when attempting to teach genre-based writing effectively (Alwasilah, 2025; Mai, 2025). This lack of theoretical knowledge can hinder the successful adoption of GBA, especially in classrooms where teachers are not familiar with the intricacies of genre specific language structures. Another challenge is the time constraints and lack of teaching resources available in Many ESL/EFL contexts. Then a final challenge is the misalignment between GBA and exam-oriented curricula (Aljafen, 2025; Damayanti et al., 2023). Many ESL/EFL programs are heavily focused on preparing student for standardized test, which prioritize grammar, vocabulary, and writing structure over genre awareness and contextual application. GBA emphasizes a more holistic understanding of writing, focusing on the communicative purpose and the structure of different genres which may

not align well with the narrow focus on exam -oriented assessments (Abdul Rahmah R, Chairil Anwar Korompot, Chaerul Fadlan Saud, Yusran, 2025).

There are several key research gaps and future directions for the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in ESL/EFL writing instruction. First, there is a scarcity of longitudinal studies that explore the long-term impact of GBA on students' writing development, especially regarding its sustained effectiveness in adapting to new genres or writing contexts. Additionally, GBA has been underexplored in online or hybrid learning environments, where digital platforms offer new opportunities for genre-based instruction but have not been fully integrated into research (Nanda Listiyawati et al., 2025; Sukmawati & Nasution, 2020b). Furthermore, more cross-cultural comparisons are needed to evaluate the adaptability of GBA across different linguistic and cultural contexts, ensuring its relevance in diverse ESL/EFL settings. Lastly, there is significant potential for integrating GBA with task-based and technology-enhanced learning models, which could further enhance its effectiveness by making learning more interactive, engaging, and contextually relevant to modern educational needs. These gaps present opportunities for future research to deepen our understanding of GBA's impact and adaptability in various learning environments.

4. Conclusion

The trend of using Genre-Based Approach (GBA) peak in 2022 with the highest dominant of publication distribution of the country are Malaysia and Indonesia. GBA offers a comprehensive framework that significantly enhances ESL/EFL learners' writing skills by explicitly teaching text structure and the communicative purposes behind various genres. Through GBA, students gain a deeper understanding of how texts are organized and how language features align with the specific social functions of genres. Evidence across multiple studies consistently supports the effectiveness of GBA in improving both linguistic and rhetorical competence, allowing learners to produce more coherent, contextually appropriate, and purposeful texts. The approach's focus on genre awareness, coupled with explicit instruction and scaffolding, enables learners to develop critical writing skills that are transferable across academic and professional contexts.

However, the successful implementation of GBA depends on several key factors, including adequate teacher training, institutional support, and adaptation to local educational contexts. Teachers need to be equipped with a solid understanding of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and genre theory, as well as effective strategies for scaffolding genre-based learning. Additionally, institutional support is crucial for ensuring that teachers have access to the necessary resources and

time to implement GBA effectively. Future research should focus on exploring digital genre pedagogy, the integration of interdisciplinary approaches, and how to foster greater learner autonomy in genre-based

writing instruction. By addressing these areas, future studies can further enhance the practical application of GBA in diverse ESL/EFL settings and help refine its pedagogical framework.

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