

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GENRE-BASED APPROACH  
ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH WRITING AT THE  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES,  
KHON KAEN UNIVERSITY IN NORTH-EASTERN  
THAILAND**

**SAOWADEE KONGPETCH**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Volume 1**

**Chapters 1 – 7 and Bibliography**

**Faculty of Education**

**University of Technology, Sydney**

**July, 2003**

## **CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

Production Note:  
Signature removed prior to publication.

---

# DEDICATION

To my parents ...

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Associate Professor Jennifer Hammond and Dr. Pauline Gibbons, for their encouraging advice, invaluable criticisms, patience and time, without which this study would not have been completed. I particularly thank Associate Professor Jennifer Hammond who not only stood by me, but also inspired me to complete this project when I doubted my ability to do so.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the Royal Thai Government for the grant of my scholarship and to the ex-president of Ubon Ratchathani University, Dr Somjit Yodseranee, and my colleagues at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, for making it possible for me to take study leave.

I am indebted to Assistant Professor Woralap Saengwattanachai, the Head of Department of Foreign Languages at Khon Kaen University for allowing me to carry out the research there. I also wish to extend my thanks to students in the Essay Writing classes in 1997 for taking part in the research and wish them well in their future.

I am most grateful to Mr Keith Smith and his family. Living at their home has been a source of happiness and contentment. They have treated me as a family member and support me when I needed it most. Keith has always been there to provide invaluable feedback on drafts of my work and to act as a sounding board when I needed someone to discuss problems and issues.

Furthermore, I am grateful to my friends, Mr John McCoy, Mr Ross Forman, Dr Simon Baker and Dr Chris Nesbitt for providing criticism on my work. I also wish to acknowledge the care, concern and endless support shown to me by Assistant Professor Sripanya Chaiyai, Mr Pratchaya Pimsingha and my friends at the Thai Welfare

Association (Sydney), as well as by staff members of Peter Bollard and Associates, where I was employed for part of my candidature.

In addition, I wish to extend my thanks to Ms Saychon Soontrachai, who selflessly devoted her time to being an observer in the classroom when this research project was being carried out at the Department of Foreign Languages, Khon Kaen University. Her devotion contributed greatly to the success of the project. Unfortunately, she passed away early in 2001 before she was able to see the results of her work.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to my family for their continuous support, understanding and care.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## VOLUME 1

Title page	i
Certificate of Authorship/Originality	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	
Volume 1	vi
Volume 2	vi
Abbreviations Used	vii
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	viii
Abstract	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Thai Educational Context	21
Chapter 3 Writing Across Cultures	58
Chapter 4 Research Methodology	119
Chapter 5 Reactions and Reflections	170
Chapter 6 The Impact of the Genre-Based Approach on Students Writing	229
Chapter 7 Conclusions and Implications	346
Bibliography	375

## **VOLUME 2**

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1	The Exposition Teaching Unit – “Should rainforests be saved?”	1
Appendix 2	Genres of Discussion, Description, Narrative and Recount	19
Appendix 3	The Questionnaire	26
Appendix 4	Students’ texts referred to in Chapter 6.	33
Appendix 5	Thematic analysis of texts referred to in Chapter 6	82
Appendix 6	Samples of analysis of six additional students’ texts – two from each of the three groups for each of the three topics	147

## ABBREVIATIONS

AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
CRN	Co-operative Research Network (Thailand)
DSP	Disadvantaged Schools Program
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MNC	Multi National Companies
NCELTR	National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research
NESB	Non English Speaking Background
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education (Australia)
TESOL	Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Testing of English as a Foreign Language



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Thailand's Educational System	23
Figure 3.1	The Teaching-Learning Cycle	102
Figure 4.1	A summary of external and internal conjunctions	164

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	The allocation of time for English teaching at both primary and secondary schools <b>before</b> the Ministry of Education's reforms of 1996	24
Table 2.2	The allocation of time for English teaching at both primary and secondary schools <b>after</b> the Ministry of Education's reforms of 1996	25
Table 4.1	Process types featured in the Exposition	139
Table 4.2	Conjunctions featured in the Exposition	141
Table 4.3	Summary of the collected data	149
Table 4.4	Data and analysis approaches	155
Table 5.1	Summary of the data used in the analysis	170
Table 5.2	Positive responses to the Teaching-Learning Cycle	174
Table 6.1	Summary of the number of students texts.	231

## ABSTRACT

The Thai government has proposed education reform programs to be competitive with its neighbours and globally. One major policy is to improve competency in English.

Thailand has a long history of importing approaches for teaching English from western countries. For a complex variety of reasons the structural-based approaches have been the most influential ones on both teachers and bureaucrats. While these approaches enable Thais to communicate at the basic level, emphasising spoken language, they do not provide systematic guidance to write extended texts effectively. Thai educators have tended to import approaches literally without adequately researching the practicality and suitability of them. This thesis is an attempt to explore whether it is possible to adapt a recently evolved, western 'genre-based' approach to the teaching of English in Thailand.

The research focuses on factual English writing because it is highly valued in government, commerce and industry. English and Thai rhetorical patterns differ significantly so students need to write their texts to meet English readers' expectations. To achieve this, students need to be taught to write explicitly. Soundly based in Systemic Functional Linguistic theory, the genre-based approach teaches writing at whole text, paragraph and clause levels. It is concerned with realising appropriate generic structure for the different social communication tasks. This approach has the potential to improve Thai students' writing ability.

The research project was primarily an ethnographic-case study that was carried out with the co-operation of 45 third year English major students for 14 weeks (from October, 1997 to February, 1998) at the Department of Foreign Languages, Khon Kaen University in northeast Thailand. It is centred on the Exposition genre because some Thai educators had noted that it was one of the most neglected in the Thai educational system, but one of the most valuable genres in western culture.

The research outcomes showed that the genre-based approach had a significant positive impact on students' factual writing, showing gains in the control of generic structure and language features of the Exposition.

Nevertheless, the research suggests that for the genre-based approach to be successfully implemented in a foreign language context such as Thai, a number of modifications are necessary.

The genre-based approach provides students with insights into cultural expectations of writing in English and has the potential to contribute to the policy goals of the Thai government for the upgrading of English teaching and also contribute to its wish of achieving the education reform agenda.