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Teaching for Transfer to First-Year L2 Writers

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies have identified that genres and genre knowledge are not only pivotal for the development of writing expertise but also for facilitating writing-related transfer. However, little research concerns issues of teaching genres for writing transfer to first-year English as a second language (L2) writers at universities in the US. This article attempts to develop a genre-based pedagogic framework for L2 transfer teaching, aiming to help first-year L2 students address linguistic, rhetorical, and genre-bound challenges they confront and improve their writing expertise, as well as develop their ability of writing transfer across disciplines. The goals of this article are dual: (a) to address an existing gap in the literature and research on transfer, and (b) provide academic writing instructions for teaching first-year L2 writers at universities in the United States.

Keywords: genre, genre-based pedagogic framework, L2 writers, writing transfer

Transferability is a key issue for both educators and learners because the goal of education is to help students apply learned knowledge to other situations beyond classrooms (Perkins & Salomon, 1992). Therefore, research on the transfer of learning, starting in the early 19th century, has been a central concern for scholars in the fields of experimental psychology and education (DePalma & Ringer, 2011). In the past decades, rhetoric and composition scholars have developed robust theoretical frameworks and conducted numerous studies on writing-related transfer involving various aspects such as learners, writing knowledge, and contexts. Most studies have focused on writing knowledge being transferred from first-year composition (FYC) courses to other disciplines or to workplaces (Beaufort, 2007; Clark & Hernandez, 2011; Driscoll, 2011; Nowacek, 2011; Robertson, Taczak, & Yancey, 2012; Rounsaville, 2012). Other research has examined the factors that affect writing transfer, including learners' personal connections, dispositions, motivations,

metacognition, effective reflection, and social identity (Beaufort, 2007; Clark & Hernandez, 2011; Driscoll, 2011).

Research on English as a second language (L2) writers and their writing has been growing as more and more L2 students have enrolled in the United States. Varied terms such as L2, English as a second language (ESL), international students, and multilingual writers are used to refer to students whose first language is not English. In this article, I use L2 to refer to students who use English as a second language. Among the literature regarding L2 students, some studies have focused on how to improve L2 students' writing ability (DasBender, 2016; Habib, Hanan, & Mallett, 2015; Johns, 2011; Tardy, 2006, 2009). For example, in DasBender' study (2016), a group of L2 students who faced linguistic and rhetorical challenges were placed in a specially designed writing course so that they could have additional time to work on their writing skills. DasBender's study showed that metacognitive tasks, such as writing reflective essays, could help improve her L2 students' writing knowledge. Similarly, DasBender (2016) and Habib et al. (2015) were concerned about international students' writing development. They applied Tardy's (2009) model in their "bridge program" to assist multilingual graduate students in building genre knowledge and developing language proficiencies.

Other scholars have investigated L2 students' learning transfer (DePalma & Ringer, 2011; James, 2009; Leki, 2007). For instance, James (2009) examined a group of L2 students' learning transfer from an ESL writing course to an academic writing task and found that the strategy of looking for similarities between different writing tasks did not promote his participants' transferability to a significant extent. Like James (2009), Leki's (2007) study not only was concerned about L2 students' writing transfer but also their academic literacy development and their personal, social, and academic experiences at an American university. Leki (2007) explained that the L2 students applied the writing knowledge such as essay structure and invention that they learned from their ESL classes and first-year writing classes. However, these students did not apply genre knowledge in their wring for other courses because these ESL and first-year writing classes did not teach the same genres that student encountered in their disciplinary or workplace writing. L2 students' writing transfer is more difficult and complicated because it involves not only writing knowledge and genre knowledge, but also L2 students' "socioacademic relationships and the ideological assumptions" (Leki, 2007, p. 261) held in new academic communities.

Compared with studies on English as a first language (L1) students' transfer, a critical gap exists in studies concerning how L2 students—in particular, first-year L2 undergraduates at the universities in the US—learn and build their writing knowledge and then transfer it to other disciplines or academic and professional settings. Considering the great number of L2 students at universities in the United States, it is worthwhile investigating how writing instruction and pedagogic strategies can help L2 students develop their writing expertise and facilitate their writing-related transfer.

The purpose of this article is to identify variables that may influence L2 students' development of writing expertise and knowledge transfer and provide a framework of language teaching strategies that merge theories and practices from writing transfer, genre learning, and genre-based pedagogies. Specifically, the goals of this article are dual: (a) address a gap existing in transfer research, and (b) provide

academic writing instructions for teaching first-year L2 writers at universities in the United States.

This article consists of four parts. First, I will analyze the relationship between transfer, genre knowledge, and L2 writers, attempting to clarify the importance of genre knowledge for writing transfer and L2 writers. Second, I will compare four prevalent genre-based pedagogies, systemic functional linguistics (SFL), English for specific purposes (ESP), the New Rhetoric, and the Brazilian educational model, from which I will offer strategies specifically suitable for L2 writers. Finally, based on the four genre traditions and transfer theory, I will develop a genre-based pedagogic framework for L2 transfer teaching, aiming to satisfy L2 writers' needs for improving English proficiency, as well as enhancing their transferability beyond first-year writing classes. This pedagogic framework focuses on genre awareness and linguistic and rhetorical conventions of genres, as well as the reflective interaction between genre knowledge, writing-related knowledge, processes, and contexts.

GENRE KNOWLEDGE, WRITING TRANSFER, AND L2 WRITERS

Genre and Writing Transfer

The current scholarship on writing-related transfer indicates that among factors, such as learners' personal connections, dispositions, motivations, and social identity, genres and genre knowledge are not only fundamental and paramount for improving writing expertise, but they also play a crucial role in writing transfer (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Beaufort, 2007; Johns, 2011; Nowacek, 2011; Rounsaville, 2012; Tardy, 2006). First, genres and genre knowledge contribute to writing-related transfer. Rounsaville (2012) argued that "transfer and rhetorical genre studies have found an especially productive partnership for exploring together whether and in what ways students transfer writing-related knowledge from one context to another" (p. 2). Perkins and Salomon (1992) claimed that "transfer of learning occurs when learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with other related materials" (p. 3). Therefore, to ensure that transfer happens, the primary step is to identify the similarities between prior learning contexts and new writing contexts. However, writing contexts are often very different from each other and it is difficult to recognize their resemblances, which means "far transfer (transfer between contexts that seem remote and alien to one another)" rarely happens (Perkins & Salomon, 1992, p. 4). In this case, genres can act as cues helping students identify connections between prior learning situations with new writing contexts because "genres' typified rhetorical features help us recognize, respond to, … and reproduce recurrent situations" (Barwarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 69).

The second advantage of genre knowledge for writing transfer is that metacognitive genre awareness can activate "high road transfer" (Perkins & Salomon, 1992, p. 8). Perkins and Salomon (1992) contended that "high road transfer depends on mindful abstraction from the context of learning or application" (p. 8). To realize high road transfer, which occurs in dissimilar contexts, individuals are required to have "reflective thought in abstracting from one context and seeking connections with others" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 190). In other words, individuals need to discover

the connections between contexts to assess what prior resources can be used, and then to extract knowledge, skills, or strategies from memories for effective writing in other contexts. On the one hand, genres' identifiable features can function as clues for learners to identify and assess unfamiliar writing situations, which is the precondition for "high road transfer" (Perkins & Salomon, 1992, p. 8). Beaufort (2007) stated that "genre [knowledge]" could serve as a tool for students to "analyze similarities and differences among writing situations they encounter" (p. 149). On the other hand, metacognition cultivated from genre analysis binds new and already-acquired knowledge, which allows students to transfer pre-existing knowledge to a new situation. In the process of learning genres, students analyze genres, abstract their typified structures, and search for connections with prior knowledge, which is referred to as the "bridging strategy" that contributes to "high road transfer" (Perkins & Salomon, 1992, p. 10). In other words, genre knowledge and metacognition actualize high road transfer through learners' identifying similarities between contexts and then retrieving relevant knowledge and skills from prior resources for new writing tasks.

Finally, the significance of genre knowledge for transfer lies in that genre knowledge is imperative for students to engage successfully in new writing situations. Beaufort (2007) claimed that knowledge about discourse communities, subject matter, rhetoric, and writing processes, together with genre knowledge are the five domains of knowledge that students must develop to analyze new writing tasks and be successful in writing performance. Beaufort elucidated the five domains of knowledge as follows: (a) discourse community knowledge entails understanding of the shared goals, values, interests, expectations, means of communication, and established norms for genres; (b) subject matter knowledge involves knowing the shared background knowledge among members of a discourse community; (c) rhetorical knowledge includes considering the audience, purpose, the best way to communicate rhetorically, and the social and material conditions within the discourse community; (d) writing process knowledge means knowing how to proceed through a writing task, given specific social and material conditions; and (e) genre knowledge embraces linguistic, textual, and rhetorical features shared with members of a discourse community (pp. 18–20). Among the five domains of knowledge, genre knowledge is the "key to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community" (Miller, 1984, p. 165). Genre knowledge empowers students to communicate effectively by providing them with tools to articulate their opinions in a way that conforms to the expectations and assumptions within a discourse community. In addition, when students reflect on appropriate rhetorical responses to a context, including writing purpose, audience, subject matter, tone and diction, they "simultaneously bring multiple knowledge domains—subject matter, rhetorical knowledge, discourse community knowledge, and writing process knowledge—into dynamic interaction" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 192).

Genre and L2 Writers

Genre knowledge is essential for L2 students to achieve academic success at universities in the US for the following reasons. First, L2 students are obligated to

master genres and genre knowledge because, at universities, the genre has become a popular organizing principle for textbooks and course syllabi (Tardy, 2009, p. 6). Some course books targeting FYC students "use genre as a frame for formulating rhetorical strategies and responding to various communicative situations, reinforcing the transfer value of genre knowledge"; some books "integrate rhetorical" and textual features as well as social functions of genres, aiming to emphasize the importance of genre knowledge (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 195).

Second, genre knowledge is a rudimentary tool for L2 students to finish writing tasks at universities. All of the university graduates, including L2 students, are expected to "be able to write" (Leki, 2007, p. 83). Therefore, they are expected to accomplish diverse writing assignments in various courses. At universities, one challenge students must face is to write essays in various genres based on their disciplines and academic levels. L2 students may find this difficult because the rhetorical styles required at U.S. universities may be absent or conflict with those in their home countries (DasBender, 2016; Hyland, 2003; Kubota, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Silva, 1993). Besides, insufficient lexical and grammatical knowledge, which can be acquired from genre analysis, may prevent them from expressing their ideas distinctly and appropriately.

Third, genre knowledge allows L2 students to participate in American academic communities smoothly. What complicates L2 students' writing development lies in their lack of genre knowledge, which inhibits them from writing essays that are in line with professors' expectations. Teaching genre can help L2 students become aware of texts' forms, functions, and social contexts (Hyland, 2003), and help them better understand conventions of American academic writing. Therefore, genres and genre knowledge can assist L2 students in developing writing expertise, help them more "readily gain access to [American academic] writing situations and genres" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 191), and get access to a "variety of realms of social power" (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, p. 8). Though genre-based approaches are widely advocated in L1 and L2 writing instruction and have enjoyed more favor in second language classrooms, genre-related theories and pedagogical practices vary greatly in terms of teaching focus, methods, and target learners (Tardy, 2006).

Genre-Based Pedagogies and Writing Transfer

Genre was first introduced into L2 writing and the field of English for specific purposes (ESP) in the 1980s by the research of John Swales (Paltridge, 2014). Since that time, interest in genre-based approaches and their application in writing instruction has been on the rise (Feez, 1998, 2002; Feez, Iedema, & White, 2008; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Hyland, 2002, 2007; Hyon, 1996; Martin, 1993, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2009; Martin & Rose, 2007a, 2007b, 2008;). Genre theorists and practitioners were divided into three camps: (a) the Sydney School, which was based on the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) work of Halliday; (b) the ESP camp, whose most famous contribution was Swales' approach of genre analysis; and (c) the New Rhetoric group, centered in North America, that based its major tenets upon rhetorical rather than linguistic theories (Johns, 2011). The SFL and ESP camps, concentrating on text and language register, were the best known and the most

successful with L2 populations. SFL has been the most popular among novice and L2 learners; ESP achieved considerable success among graduate students and professionals, while the New Rhetoric approaches have been best known in FYC courses in North America (Johns, 2011). Furthermore, Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) introduced another genre theory, the Brazilian educational model, which "has synthesized various traditions: the French and Swiss genre pedagogical traditions, European philosophical traditions, critical discourse analysis, the systemic functional linguistic genre tradition, ESP, and New Rhetoric" (p. 76). In the next section, I will summarize the features and principles of these four genre traditions, based on which I will advocate a framework of pedagogical strategies for teaching L2 students, seeking to help them build genre knowledge and facilitate their writing transfer.

Systemic Functional Linguistics and English for Specific Purposes

Theorists of SFL and ESP have both emphasized the importance of teaching and learning "specified text types" (Johns, 2011, p. 57), with which L2 students can "communicat[e] effectively in particular, professional, academic, and occupational communities" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 42). Both SFL and ESP approaches "seek to offer writers an explicit understanding of how target texts are structured and why they are written the way they are" (Hyland, 2003, p. 11), thereby "demystify[ing] the kinds of writing that will enhance learners', [in particular disadvantaged students'], career opportunities and provide access to a greater range of life choices" (Hyland, 2004, p. 24). However, SFL and ESP theories are different in target learners, focused genres, and understanding of contexts. Comparatively, ESP approaches are more suitable for first-year L2 students at US universities in two aspects. First, ESP genre approaches generally "target more advanced, often graduate-level, international students in British and US universities, who, as non-native speakers of English, are linguistically disadvantaged" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 43). That is to say, ESP focuses on structural and linguistic features of genres, especially for fulfilling the requirement of L2 writers whose English proficiency needs to be improved to live up to academic expectations at universities.

Second, to meet the L2 college students' demands from their disciplines, academic fields, and other social spheres, ESP approaches teach genres, such as research essays, literature reviews, conference abstracts, grant proposals, job application letters, and so on, where the genres' "communicative purposes are more specified and attributable" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 44). In other words, ESP emphasizes genres that are broadly required in various disciplines for communicative purposes within academic communities. In accordance with its communicative purpose, ESP scholars consider genres as linguistic and rhetorical actions, involving the use of stable linguistic and rhetorical conventions to respond to and participate in academic and professional discourse communities (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Hyland, 2004). As indicated by previous literature (Ahn, 2012; Cheng, 2006; Hyland, 2003, 2007; Yasuda, 2011), teaching textual features and specific genres could raise L2 students' genre awareness and enhance their chances of succeeding in academic discourse communities.

Despite their initial intention of equipping L2 students with available language and structures to participate in discourse communities effectively, both ESP and SFL have been critiqued for enhancing prototypical textual and linguistic features, which tend to be memorized as rigid formats, thus preventing transfer (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). This issue is complicated by the reality that "authentic texts tend to be an amalgamation of different and yet related genres, instead of an individual one with the rigid and identifiable format" (Bhatia, 2002, p. 281). Though ESP approaches emphasize linguistic and textual features of genres for communicative purposes, which are crucial and indispensable to L2 writers, ESP pedagogy is limited in underscoring the dynamic relationship between genres and discourse community (Hyland, 2004), thus thwarting students' transferring of genre knowledge to other situations. On the contrary, New Rhetoric scholars consider genres not only as "situated within contexts but also as constitutive of contexts" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 54). That is to say, a genre is not only a way to respond to a situation but also a vehicle to reconstruct the situation through students' transferring pre-existing knowledge to the new writing situation. ESP and the New Rhetoric pedagogies have different but complementary focuses; therefore, they can work together to meet L2 students' demands' for developing language proficiency as well as for employing genre knowledge to fulfill social functions.

The New Rhetoric Pedagogy

In FYC courses in North America, the most widely used genre-based approach is the New Rhetoric pedagogy (Johns, 2011). The New Rhetoric approach, influenced by poststructuralism, rhetoric, and first language composition, focuses on "rhetorical contexts rather than detailed analyses of text elements" (Hyland, 2003, p. 21). Perceiving genres as "multi-modal, process-based and situated in mediated activities," New Rhetoricians advocate the development of students' metacognitive awareness of genre knowledge, which entails examining the relationships among texts, rhetorical purposes of texts, ideologies, and the broader political, cultural, and social contexts in which texts are produced (Freedman, 1999; Johns, 2011). In this way, students can recognize that genres are neither isolated nor static; instead, genres are in dynamic interaction with other relevant factors and can be transferred to other contexts.

Metacognitive genre awareness can be developed through genre analysis in New Rhetoric approaches. New Rhetoricians have built effective methods for cultivating metacognitive genre awareness, which provides "guidance to structure specific problems and learnings into more abstract principles that can be applied to new situations" (Beaufort, 2007, p. 15). Genre analysis in New Rhetoric approaches includes four steps: (1) collect the genre samples from various contexts to help students notice patterns within the genre; (2) identify and describe the situations the genre is used, like setting, subject, participants, and purposes; (3) identify and describe patterns in the genre's features such as content, rhetorical appeals, structure, format, types of sentences, and diction; and (4) analyze what these genres patterns reveal about the situation and scene (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010).

The steps of carrying out genre analysis reflect the interaction-orientated trajectory of New Rhetoric approaches, which stress the dynamic relationship between genres and contexts by asking students to analyze genre, then context, then genre again. In other words, students first analyze genre patterns to locate contexts, then contexts for rhetorical characteristics, and then return to genre analysis to learn genres' linguistic and textual features. In so doing, students can realize the interdependence between genres and contexts, and students are able to "abstract" the general principles of genres as well as see how rhetorical features connect to social actions that genres embody, which are prerequisites for students to materialize "high road transfer" (Perkins & Salomon, 1992, p. 8). Then, students can use acquired genre knowledge to "participate and intervene in [new writing] situations they encounter" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 192).

The Brazilian Educational Model

The Brazilian educational model "has synthesized the linguistic, rhetorical, and social/sociological traditions" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 74). Therefore, it shares some common attributes with SFL, ESP, and the New Rhetoric theories. For example, it emphasizes linguistic conventions analysis of SFL and ESP, as well as genre awareness and attention to the social context of the New Rhetoric (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 177). However, what distinguishes the Brazilian educational model from the other three genre traditions is that it is characterized by embracing learners' previous knowledge and experiences. Taking into consideration students' previous knowledge, cultures, and experiences is of vital importance to L2 students with diverse cultural and academic backgrounds because research in composition studies indicates that students' prior knowledge has both positive and negative impact on their writing transfer (DasBender, 2016; Robertson et al., 2012; Zamel, 1997). The central steps of the Brazilian Educational Model include: (1) initial production of a genre based on writers' previous knowledge and writing experiences; (2) analysis of textual and rhetorical features of the genre; (3) analysis of the communicative situation; and (4) students' final production of the genre (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). Though there are overlapping features between the Brazilian educational model and other genre pedagogies, its concern about students' prior knowledge is especially illuminating for L2 writing instruction.

Genre-Based Pedagogic Framework for First-Year L2 Writers

The above four genre-based pedagogies are designed for specific learners and contexts. Each has its specific advantages and can promote L2 students' writing ability (Ahn, 2012; Cheng, 2006; Hyland, 2003, 2007; Liu, 2018). However, none of the above genre-based pedagogy explicitly reveals how to use genre knowledge to help students transfer writing knowledge to other writing tasks or settings. Therefore, a framework that combines the above four types of genre-based pedagogy and transfer theory is needed to not only embrace these L2 students' previous experiences and address challenges they confront, but also to satisfy their academic needs at

universities, especially their ability to transfer what they learn across diverse writing contexts.

Challenges to First-year L2 Writers

According to the literature on genre learning and teaching, as well as L2 students' writing transfer, L2 students mainly face three challenges. The first challenge is language proficiency. L2 writers have admitted that when they face writing tasks, difficulties include linguistic elements such as vocabulary, grammar, language structures, and so on (DasBender, 2016; Leki, 2007; Tardy, 2006). In addition, L2 writers tend to be "preoccupied with developing their expertise in the domain of formal knowledge, neglecting rhetorical and subject matter knowledge" (Habib et al., 2015, sec. 4). It may become more problematic when students think that "with a set of grammatical rules and vocabulary lists, they can unequivocally and seamlessly transfer meaning from L1 to L2" (Cozart, Jensen, Wichmann-Hansen, Kupatadze, & Chiu, 2016, p. 314). Nevertheless, many L2 students believe that inadequate linguistic and textual knowledge is a big impediment to their writing development, so they give first priority to lexical and grammatical elements over other domains of writing knowledge. Their obsession with English language proficiency development explains why L2 writers tend to exploit "other texts for conventional expressions and terms" (Tardy, 2006, p. 96). If L2 students overemphasize how to say what they want to say, they may ignore that they have to say it in a way/form that meets the expectations of their instructors and other academic community members.

The second difficulty that L2 writers face is that prior writing experiences and cultural backgrounds may constrain and prevent L2 students from "re-engaging any prior writing knowledge and adapting such knowledge for new rhetorical purposes" (DasBender, 2016, p. 289). Though many L2 writers are successful in their first language writing and have obtained sophisticated cognitive abilities and metacognitive strategies of writing (Leki, 1992), their linguistic and rhetorical conventions do not always transfer successfully across languages or may actually interfere with their L2 writing (Connor, 1996). It is a "truism that students draw on prior knowledge when facing new tasks" (Robertson et al., 2012, p. 4); therefore, in spite of the enormous differences of writing knowledge between two languages, some L2 writers tend to directly transfer what they have learned from L1 writing to L2 writing tasks. For example, the L2 writer in DasBender's study used a Chinese rhetorical pattern in his English writing, which generated "cross-cultural barriers" (Cozart et al., 2016, p. 326). In other words, if the L1 writing style is at odds with the expectations of readers from L2, utilizing their prior L1 writing experiences may result in "negative transfer" (Perkins & Salomon, 1992, p. 3). However, even advanced L2 writers may draw on their L1 when writing generic texts (Tardy, 2006, p. 96). Additionally, their previous experiences of taking English examinations may negatively impact L2 students' writing transfer when they study at universities in the United States. For example, in order to study at U.S. universities, most multilingual students, if not all of them, have to take language proficiency exams such as TOEFL and IELTS, whose writing sections are characterized by limited types of genre. Actually, at universities, students will encounter quite a number of genres—personal

writing, academic writing, popular culture, public affairs/civic writing, and professional/workplace writing (Bean, 2011). Consequently, L2 students' previous experiences with the genre in the exams may limit their perceptions of a genre, hence causing negative transfer when they attempt to use their prior genre knowledge in new writing tasks.

The third problem facing L2 writers at U.S. universities is that L2 writers may become "passive recipients of the knowledge and conventions of a discourse of power" (Depalma & Ringer, 2011, p. 142), which hinders writing transfer from one situation to another. If writing instructors accommodate traditional English academic practices, ignoring the ideological implications hidden in its academic culture and excluding L2 writers' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, L2 writers may tend to see the relationship between texts and contexts as static and fixed, rather than dynamic and complex, thus failing to transfer. For example, there are rigid format and linguistic requirements for research papers in English, which actually marginalizes writers from other cultures or classes who follow different academic conventions. If L2 students fail to realize that genres are tools, serving particular discourse communities and "perform[ing] social actions and relations" (Barwarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 59) through established linguistic and rhetoric symbols, they will be constrained by the set rules and can neither transfer genre knowledge nor reconstruct situations with their writing. In regard to the interrelationship between genres' linguistic conventions and rhetorical and sociological attributes, Barwarshi and Reiff (2010) offered a sound argument:

> Genres are not only communicative tools but also socially derived, typified ways of knowing and acting. Therefore, to study and teach genres in the context of [the] socio-rhetorical understanding requires both a knowledge of a genre's structural and lexico-grammatical features as well as a knowledge of the social action(s) a genre produces and the social typifications that inform that action. (p. 77)

A PEDAGOGIC FRAMEWORK FOR L2 TRANSFER TEACHING

In spite of the advantages of the above genre-based pedagogies, none of them is a one-size-fits-all pedagogy and none of them "can be realized in their purest form in the actual classroom" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 29) because of "the complexity of language, learning, and language learners" (Larsen-Freeman, 1991, p. 269). Therefore, instead of proposing a specific pedagogy, I advocate for a framework that I call "pedagogic framework for L2 transfer teaching," based on the above four genre-based pedagogies together with transfer theory. This pedagogic framework is inspired by Kumaravadivelu's (1994) concept of "postmethod condition" which aims to "empower teachers with knowledge, skill, and autonomy … [so that they can] devise for [their classes] a systematic [and] coherent" pedagogy (p. 27). Like Kumaravadivelu's (1994) framework for second/foreign language teaching, I am proposing this pedagogic framework for L2 transfer teaching, aiming to offer some strategies and tactics based on which instructors who teach L2 students can "design

varied and situation-specific microstrategies or classroom techniques to effect desired learning outcomes" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 27).

Abstracting from the four genre-based pedagogies and transfer theories, pedagogic framework for L2 transfer teaching consists of six strategies, highlighting genres' linguistic and rhetorical conventions, learners' previous knowledge and experiences, genre awareness, critical literacy, and reflection, as well as dynamic interactions between genre knowledge and discourse community. The six strategies for teaching L2 transfer comprise the following: (a) analyze textual and linguistic patterns; (b) build on previous cultural and academic knowledge; (c) raise genre awareness; (d) emphasize the diversity and dynamics of genres; (e) foster critical literacy; and (f) engage students in reflection.

Strategy 1: Analyze Textual and Linguistic Patterns

The first strategy concerns the analysis of textual and linguistic patterns. The analysis of linguistic features addresses the challenge of language proficiency facing L2 writers. Linguistic structures and textual patterns can provide L2 students with diction and structures to conform to the expectations of a particular discourse community so that they not only can articulate themselves accurately and distinctly but also gain access to the discourse community. For example, when writing an academic essay, lexical-grammatical and textual conventions, such as tense, person, vocabulary, and structure, should be congruous with requirements of professors or editors of a specific journal. These writing conventions remain opaque for L2 students until their instructors teach them explicitly (Paltridge, 2007). Furthermore, the analysis of textual and linguistic features equips L2 students with "meta-linguistic resources that assist them in producing genres while also developing long-term rhetorical competence that transfers to other writing situations" (Barwarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 180). Though formal knowledge such as structure, textual, and grammatical rules are critiqued and scorned by some compositionists and rhetoricians, "novice writers have a great need for form because form makes students feel safe and can help them craft an effective text" (Clark & Hernandez, 2011, p. 74). Sommers and Saltz (2004) affirmed the idea that "encourage[ing] students to use structure relieves students of the responsibility of inventing the field for themselves" (p. 138). To put it differently, L2 students can start with and then go beyond the analysis of textual and linguistic features.

Strategy 2: Build on Previous Cultural and Academic Knowledge

The second strategy is to incorporate L2 students' cultural and previous academic experiences into genre instruction. Consciously invoking students' prior writing experiences and comparing the differences of rhetorical traditions in two languages can help alleviate L2 students' confusion when they strive to situate themselves in new writing contexts. For example, if the Chinese student in DasBender's (2016) study had been taught the differences of rhetorical styles between English and Chinese language before he wrote the essay, he would not have failed to realize his communicative purpose because of using Chinese rhetoric in English writing.

However, comparing different linguistic and rhetorical differences does not mean to devalue L2 students' prior knowledge. Instead, it is essential for both L2 students and their instructors to be aware that those differences could be regarded as resources or "evidence of alternative patterns and understandings, rather than of individual inability or poor study habits" (Hyland, 2003, p. 37). Furthermore, instructors should help L2 students build up confidence and offer opportunities for them to realize that being an L2 student is an advantage, not a deficiency.

Strategy 3: Raise Genre Awareness

The third strategy suggests that genre analysis should be employed to develop L2 students' metacognition of genre awareness. Metacognition has proven to be an "important component of knowledge transfer, especially across dissimilar contexts such as FYC courses, courses in different academic disciplines, and workplace settings" (Barwarshi & Rieff, 2010, p. 190). Metacognition is especially significant when students encounter unfamiliar writing tasks or contexts because metacognition assists students to assess what prior knowledge or concepts can be applied in new writing situations (Tinberg, 2015). Genre awareness can be promoted through consciously conducting genre analysis. In the process of genre analysis, students examine a specific genre's rhetorical patterns, content, and linguistic and textual conventions. More importantly, students also learn to analyze the interactive relationships between genre conventions, contexts, and discourse community. Through examining the interaction between genre conventions and discourse community, students can see that "discourse community goals and values were manifested in the genres of the discourse community" (Beaufort, 1997, p. 521). Despite the constantly changing nature of a discourse community and genre, genre analysis enables L2 students to analyze various situations and discourse community, hence producing appropriate texts accordingly.

Strategy 4: Emphasize the Diversity and Dynamics of Genre

This strategy highlights that genre conventions are fluid and flexible, as well as co-constructed. When teaching genre, teachers should be cautious that "repeated practice of the same genres may become entrenched" (Anson, 2015, p. 77). That is, students tend to take genres as static, "solidified," or "sedimented" and apply the fixed pattern of genres in any writing situation, "resulting in a mismatch between what they produce and the expectations or norms of their new community" (Anson, 2015, p. 77). The social relations among a discourse community are dynamic in the long term, though they are stable in the short-term. Correspondingly, in addition to the current wide range of genres across disciplines and cultures, new genres are constantly being created and repurposed as discourses increasingly become culturally, linguistically, and multimodally diverse. It is unlikely to master all types of genre. However, being aware of the dynamic nature of genre allows students to see the similarities and connections between various genres and writing settings, thus promoting their writing transfer across writing tasks and contexts.

Strategy 5: Foster Critical Literacy

According to Luke (2012), critical literacy aims to recognize, critique, and transform dominant ideologies, cultures, economics, institutions, and political systems by using literacy for social justice in marginalized and disenfranchised communities (p. 5). When L2 students acquire genre knowledge and other forms of academic discourses and conventions, they also internalize the embedded English ideologies that produce, remain, reproduce, and reinforce hegemony of dominant classes. To reshape and transform social injustice, both instructors and L2 students should commit to critiquing ideologies and include "cultural and linguistic minorities, indigenous learners, and other marginalized [groups]" (Luke, 2012, p. 6). Therefore, genre awareness should involve analyzing attitudes, values, and ideology embedded in the genres' rhetorical patterns, content, and linguistic and textual conventions (Barwarshi & Rieff, 2010). Like Freire and Macedo (1987) stated, "Reading the word, [then] reading the world." In so doing, students can realize the power relationships between genre conventions, discourse community, and texts. Furthermore, students can better understand that genre is a "social action" (Miller, 1984), reacting to the specific rhetorical situation and subject to changing, reshaping, and transforming across communities, cultures, societies, and time. As many genre scholars have agreed, genres are socially derived (Barwarshi & Rieff, 2010; Beaufort, 1997; Hyland, 2003; Miller, 1984), reflecting "social, political, and historical realities" (Threadgold, 1989, p. 106) and serving the interests of particular institutions and groups. Though genre knowledge allows L2 students to gain access to academic discourses and achieve success in their writing, ignoring the social and political purposes of written and spoken discourses will not only put L2 students at a disadvantage, but also prevent their writing transfer across assignments and contexts. What's worse, if L2 students cannot critically consider genre conventions and discourse community, the embedded ideology that privileges certain type of writing practices or language varieties over others may be "reproduced" and enhanced (Emery, 2016, p. 8) through the marginalized themselves. In the same manner, the superiority of the dominant class and the inferiority of other language varieties, as well as the speakers of those languages, are reproduced and reinforced (Kubota & Okuda, 2016, p. 172).

In brief, genre analysis can help L2 students deepen their understanding of genre knowledge, including the types of genre and their relationship with the value and ideology of dominant discourse community, as well as how genre is interwoven with audiences, composing purpose, and contexts.

Strategy 6: Engage Students in Reflection

The last strategy, the key to promoting learning transferability, is to engage students in the reflective interaction with genre knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, discourse community, and different writing contexts through reflective essays. This reflection, referred by Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak (2014) as "big-picture thinking" (p. 4), enables students to analyze the similarities and differences between prior, current, and future writing situations, then determine whether or not, and how,

to apply their prior knowledge into new writing situations (Beaufort, 2016; Yancey et al., 2014). Students not only examine what they learn about writing, genres, and rhetorical situations, but also reflect on their successful/unsuccessful practices and "the qualities and components that contribute in significant ways to the production of effective writing," (Tinberg, 2015, p. 76) as well as how they can transfer what they learn to other disciplines or workplaces.

Based on the above pedagogic framework for L2 transfer teaching, the pedagogical steps to teach L2 learners writing transfer can be rendered into the following learner actions. Step 1 is to build connections between students' previous writing experiences and their new writing tasks. Students compare the genres and rhetorical considerations in L1 and L2 writing, through which students can become aware of the different conventions and rhetorical styles in L2 writing. Accordingly, L2 students can choose to avoid or draw on or adapt their previous knowledge for new readers and purposes in new rhetorical situations. Step 2 is genre analysis. Students analyze rhetorical moves and linguistic features of the L2 genre, which provides students with linguistic and rhetorical resources to construct texts. In Step 3, students analyze the context in which the genre is used to understand the interdependent relationship between genres and contexts as well as to establish connections with their prior learning contexts. In Step 4, students analyze the interrelationship between genre and context to gain insight how the linguistic and textual patterns of the genre "suit rhetorical purposes and situations" (Devitt, 2004, p. 213), and how in turn, these generic forms can be utilized to reconstruct situations. Finally, through reflective assignments or activities, students "abstract" what they learn about genres and writing skills, "detect" the similarities and differences between prior and new writing situations, then "select" applicable skills and knowledge to transfer to novel writing contexts (Perkins & Salomon, 2012). The above pedagogical steps are not linear nor static. Instructors of L2 students can modify and/or add steps or materials to adjust to their students' individualized needs, considering L2 students' specific cultural and rhetorical background, as well as teaching circumstances.

CONCLUSION

This article suggests a pedagogic framework for teaching first-year L2 writers in U.S. universities. Research on transfer in rhetoric and composition studies has achieved rich findings, but only a few of them have concerned first-year L2 students at universities. Because increasing numbers of international students are enrolling at U.S. universities, it is imperative to offer pedagogical approaches to address these L2 students' academic demands and help them reach institutional expectations. In this article, I have developed a pedagogical framework that consists of six teaching strategies, drawing on transfer theory, previous literature on L2 students, and genre theories—SFL, ESP, the New Rhetoric, and the Brazilian educational model. Focusing on metacognitive genre awareness and linguistic and rhetorical conventions of genres, as well as the dynamic interaction across writing-related knowledge, this framework targets first-year L2 writers at U.S. universities, aiming to propose a tool to help students work toward analyzing writing assignments and situations, including their "hidden ideological dimensions" (Leki, 2007, p. 285). The strategies in this

framework not only help L2 students develop their writing expertise and promote their transferability, but also help instructors and institutions recognize these students' challenges and accommodate their need for academic success and social equality.

However, the framework described above is "an open-ended set of options" rather than "a closed set of formulae" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 43). These strategies should be contextualized and classroom-oriented. This pedagogic framework is designed for instructors to adopt, modify, expand, and enrich through experimenting and exploring in their classrooms. With ongoing exploration, effective pedagogical approaches can be devised to help develop L2 writers writing expertise and transferability.

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