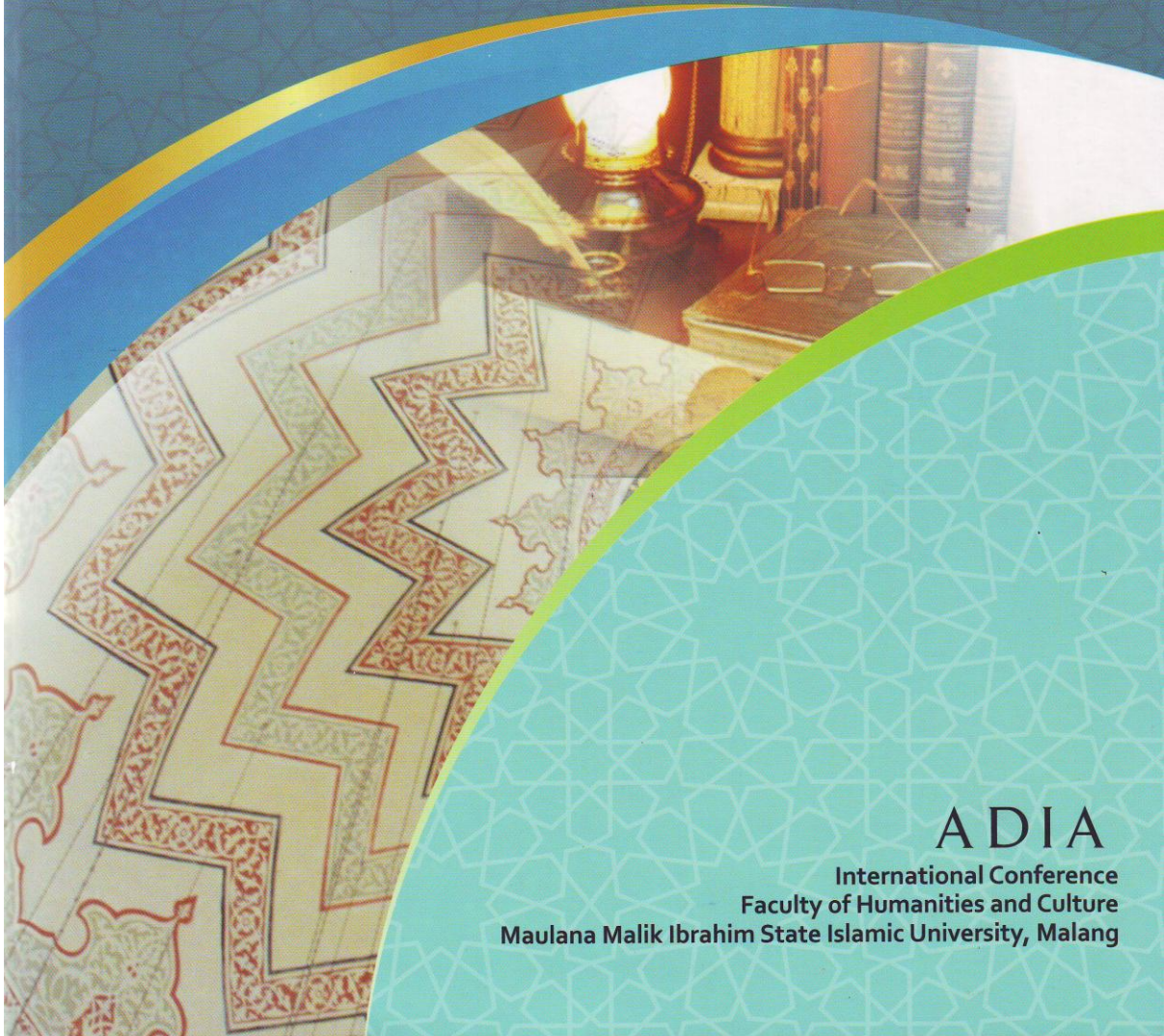


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Genre Analysis of Opinion texts in the Jakarta Post

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A. Introduction

The notion of genre has been popular for the last few decades. This popularity and its growing recognition, one of them, due to its worthy contribution in teaching writing (Martin, 1984; 2002, Swales, 1990; Johns, 1997; Hyland 1990, Paltridge, 1996; 2001a; Flowerdew, 2000; Johns, et al., 2006). However, there is no consensus about its definition. This mostly attributed to scholar's diverse expertise resulting in their idiosyncratic view of genre. These differences are recognised in the commonly known three genre schools; Sydney school (emphasizing on social purpose and staged genre e.g. Factual writing: Exploring and challenging social reality (Martin, 1985), Language, register and genre (Martin, 1984), New Rhetoric school (based on the notion of rhetorical tradition in North America. e.g. Genre as social action (Miller, 1984), Systems of genre and the enactment of social intention (Bazerman, 1994) and ESP school (the blend of Sydney School and New Rhetoric school, e.g. Genre analysis: English in academic and research setting (Swales, 1990), English in today's research world: A writing guide (Swales & Feak, 2000) (Hyon, 1996; Hyland, 2002a; Johns et al, 2006; Paltridge & Wang, 2010).

B. Background theory

Genre is "a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture" (Martin, 1984, p.25). Accordingly, staged refers to several steps before reaching goals, goal-oriented signals that the use of genre is to 'get the things done', and social as peoples engage in genre in their interaction with others (Martin & Rose, 2003, p.7).

Viewing genre from the perspective of social action, Miller (1984) argue that "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centred not on the substance and the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplished" (p.151). Further she explained that "hierarchical models of communication can help illuminate the nature and structure of such rhetorical action" (p.151). From this definition, it is concluded that the emphasis of the study on genre is on ends (goals) themselves not on the patterns of forms or methods (Miller, 1984).

Drawing the perspective of genre from its eclectic blend of the two notions above, Swales (1990) states that "a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p.58). The example of this can be seen from a genre network for graduate students (Swales & Feak 2000). In this example, genres complement each other to denote shared 'communicative

purpose' for example open genre such as conference paper, conference abstract etc and the supporting genre such as curriculum vitae, research paper reviews etc.

Despite of the 'seemingly different orientations' genre shares some common features (Bhatia, 2002) such as 'the reflection of culture', 'recognisable communicative events', 'highly structured and conventionally constructs', 'focus on conventionalised communicative events embedded within disciplinary and professional practices', 'all disciplinary and professional genres have their own integrity' (p.23).

It is worthy of note that genre is dynamic, may change (Paltridge, 2006) for example in relation with technological advancement (letter to email genre), and can be mixed with different genres (Bhatia, 1997) such as the introduction of academic book made up of 'introduction, preface, foreword, foreword, acknowledgement, publishers blurb' (p.181) and determining genre category involves the notion of 'sufficient similarity' (Swales, 1990), the similarity of features among texts within the same genre.

Finally, in a practical level, knowing genre knowledge, the knowledge of "both form and content, including a sense of what content is appropriate to a particular purpose in a particular situation at a particular point in time" (Huckin & Berkenkotter, 1995, p.13) is very prominent aspects in conducting genre analysis (Johns, 1997; Paltridge, 2001b) because it has dynamic relationship primarily with academic discourse (Bhatia, 2002) as well as the fact that the teaching of this is 'motivated by pedagogical applications' (Hyland, 2002, p.115; Flowerdew, 2000). These include 'shared name', 'shared communicative purpose', 'shared knowledge of roles', 'shared knowledge of context', 'shared knowledge of text features (conventions)', 'shared knowledge of text content', 'shared knowledge of register', 'shared cultural values', and 'shared awareness of intertextuality' (p.20-37), and also the relation with other genres (Bazerman, 1994; 2004) and genre networks (Swales, 1990; 2004).

Bearing these genre knowledge perspectives in mind, this paper will analyse and discuss three opinion texts from 'The Jakarta Post' (a national newspaper in Indonesia), in terms of the setting of the genre, the purpose of genre, the intended audience of genre, the relationship between participants in the genre, expectations, conventions and requirement for genre, shared background knowledge, values and understanding in the genre, and the relationship of genre with other genres or texts as well as the its implication for professional practice.

C. Data analysis

The data taken electronically from 'The Jakarta Post', a national English newspaper in Indonesia. The chosen data are opinions on " curriculum improvement, teaching techniques, and critical thinking skills'. These data were taken in 2008, 2009, 2010. These three texts are conveniently taken due to its clear structure, and scholarly written and also the fact that the similar articles do not appear frequently in that newspaper. These aspects might represent the prototype of argumentative texts which is an important issue in a genre (Johns, 1997). It is also worth to mention that even though the data are taken from different years, it would not alleviate the importance of the issues themselves as the electronic links help the readers to go through the



interrelated topics. The consideration of choosing the samples from the same newspaper is the idea of sufficient similarity (Swales, 1990) of the texts, in which all opinion articles must have been reviewed by the same group of editors before being published and also the fact that every newspaper has its own writing style.

The 'opinion section' is categorised generically as argumentation. Golder and Coirier (1996) said that "argumentative discourse is defined-as opinion-based discourse in which speaker or writer takes a particular stance on a controversial topic and attempts to convince the listener or reader to adopt that position"(p.271).

Argument is classified into a micro genre representing the forms of discourse with the aim to persuade readers or listeners to accept claim either logical or emotional (Rotenburg 1994, cited in Wang 2004). This argument then is categorised hortatory exposition, and analytical exposition (Martin, 1985; Gerot & Wignell, 1994), but only hortatory will be discussed through the rest of the assignment with regards to the characteristics of the data themselves. They are linked to archive (site) providing further information to related topics (Bateman, Delin, & Henchel, 2007). These links, in my opinion, may function as intertextual texts as these texts interrelate each other.

Discussion of data analysis

Text I 'Tend to our national treasure: improve our education system'

The setting of genre

The text is taken from electronic newspaper "The Jakarta Post", a national English newspaper which is also available in the hard copy form, published on 12/27/2008.

The purpose of genre

The purpose of this text is to persuade the reader or listener that something should be the case (Gerot & Wignell, 1994) or to persuade the readers to do a change, an improvement in Indonesian education systems (Martin, 1985). Thus, this text functions as hortatory exposition.

The intended audience

It may be seen from the title 'tend to our national treasure: improve our education system', and the claim made in sixth paragraph "the problems seem to be system-wide, and any solutions must address the whole system ahead on", that this is intended primarily for the ministry of education since the party having the authority to improve the system is those agents in ministry of national education. However, it might also be projected to ministry of finance as the text also mentions the salary of teachers (remuneration) in the second paragraph, in which it is regulated by under this ministry. This make hortatory is 'addressed to rather specific rather than general audience' (Martin, 1985, p. 25). Furthermore, this text is also appropriate for educators in general as the issue has impacts for them.

The relationship between participants in the genre

The participants' relationship in the genre is somewhat problematic. When the article is read by minister of education who is also professor, this might probably be categorised as collegial relationship. If the reader is teacher, then relationship could be an expert to non expert etc, or the writer might simply be unknown for reader.

Expectations, conventions and requirements of genre

The text structure of is thesis, arguments and re-statement of arguments or recommendation (Hyland, 1990; Gerrot & Wignell, 1994; Paltridge, 2010; Coffin, 2004).

According to Martin (1985), the central aspect to determine whether the text is hortatory or analytical exposition is the nature of the thesis. If the thesis indicates **command**, persuade to do something that the text is hortatory. It is also filled with lots of attitudinal verbs, using first persons and more like spoken English (Martin, 1985). Further, it is said that hortatory exposition is commonly found in editorials, debates, political speech as this aims at persuade readers to do a change. Moreover, it is usually employed by opposition. On the other hand, if the thesis simply indicates **statement** that something is the case, which is usually found in status quo, then it belongs to analytical exposition e.g. academic lectures, tutorials, seminars, scholarly papers etc (Martin, 1985).

In the above text, the thesis "there is growing public disenchantment with the education system in Indonesia" (p.1), strongly implies that "serious problems emerge in education system" and yet if not solved it may result in further worse societal disappointment. This deeply indicates that in order that this does not happen, some solutions should urgently be taken. This clearly denotes that the text belongs hortatory exposition.

The use of modal and modal perfect in the text such as "seem to be"(p.6), "must address"(p.6), "should be lauded as"(p.8), "need to be used"(p.9), "should not choose"(p.10), "need to change"(p.7), "should be governed"(p.13), "should be banned"(p.17), "need to play"(p.23), "need for"(p.25), also strongly indicate that a change should be done and this is 'hypothetical nature of argument', carried by 'modality and modulation' (Martin, 1985, p. 26). Hinkel (1995) mentions that 'should' implicates social expectation and 'need to' indicate 'internal, personal obligation, compulsion, and or requirement', p. 335). It is obvious therefore that the writer encourages and expects the reader to do something.

The text is also clearly structured and arguments are presented impressively by employing transition markers such as first, second, third etc from paragraph 1 to 25, and by providing change of reasoning through elaborative explanation in each point. This creates an articulate texture (Butt, et al., 2000)

The vocabularies used are very scientific such as 'public disenchantment' (p.1), 'student centric learning' (p.4), 'accountable' (p.4), 'along with the chain of reasoning which make the formal and persuasive. This text also displays the characteristic of spoken text with the presence of the word 'sadly' (p.1), 'zombies' (p.17), and the sentence such as 'academic can be fun and entertaining on TV or radio too!' (p.23).



These might indicate writer's feeling and attitude as to gain empathy from the readers (Martin, 1985).

Shared background knowledge, values and understanding

Having realised the texture of the text, 'the way the meanings fit coherently with each other' (Butt, et al., 2000), it may be inferred that writer and reader share about the condition and the history of education system in Indonesia which include, the expensive cost of good quality education so that writer described as 'quality schools do exist but are reserved for the 'haves' (p.1). The shared understanding about the relatively low salary of teacher (gurus) might have already been established by writer and read

Other shared understanding is the fact that being teacher or educator seems to be positioned lower than other professions such as medical doctor, fire-fighters etc (p.8). This also leads to societal interest that being medical doctor is more favourable than being teacher. It is also understandable that there is still gap about the quality among the schools or universities. Some schools and universities can maintain and foster their quality and others are still left behind. And yet those 'recognised schools and universities charge 'expensive' fees'. This might trigger the writer to argue that 'Schools and Universities should be governed by greater accountability, transparency and professionalism...governance of schools at a grassroots level is also crucial' (p.13).

Next, shared fact is that the focus of learning in some schools is rote memorization. This learning focus on student's memory rather than problem solving.

Clearly from the text, it can be seen that the emphasis of the text is on the problems of education systems in Indonesia on which the proposed solutions are based. The facts that were downplayed are the system of education in developed countries mentioned, as this just to make comparison (Huckin, 1997).

Genre relationship with other texts or other genre

This text inevitably relies on other text or other genre. This genre relates with other genre such as the curriculum, assessment system, teacher professional development, teacher remuneration, act of constitution governing education, government educational policy, recognised and low quality schools, National examination, Non-government organisation (Bazerman, 1994; Swales, 1990; 2004) and 'the reform of secondary education in Indonesia' (Yeom, Acedo & Utomo, 2002, p.56) as this article concerns with the improvement on Indonesian curriculum.

The intertextuality is also displayed through the link to other topics such as "alternative to critical thinking education", 'enlisting educators to uphold multiculturalism', 'bettering how teachers teach', 'and education inconsistencies'. For example, 'improving education' might create 'critical thinking education', 'bettering how to teach', these in which texts are socially linked (Fairclough, 1992a; 1992b, 1995).

Text II 'Bettering how teachers teach'

The setting of genre

The text is taken from electronic newspaper "The Jakarta Post", a national English newspaper which is also available in the hard copy published on 01/10/2009.

The purpose of genre

The text is to persuade the reader that something should be or should not be the case (Gerot and Wignell, 1994), and to do a change (Martin, 1985). Therefore, it is classified as **hortatory exposition** text

The intended audience

The text is intended mostly for primary and secondary school teachers. This notion is obvious in the first paragraph stating that 'qualified teacher' is the primary concern of the discussion. Another possible audience of the text is educational stakeholders across the globe who might be interested to know Indonesian educational system.

The relationship between participants in the genre

The relationship between participants in the genre is somewhat problematic regarding the medium of genre itself. The writer can be unknown for the readers. Some may already familiar if reading writer's previous articles. It may also be possible that the readers can be the writer's colleagues.

The writer seems to project himself as lecturer having wider theoretical perspectives on education versus teachers who are likely to have less insight. The writer also makes use of impersonal subject throughout the text. This indicates the invisibility of authorial identity (Hyland, 2002b; Hyland, 2005), which is common to second language writers as they avoid the sense of authority.

Expectations, conventions and requirements of genre

The text structure of the text is thesis, arguments and re-statement of arguments or recommendation (Hyland, 1990; Gerrot & Wignell, 1994; Paltridge, 2010; Coffin, 2004).

The thesis in paragraph [p1], indicated in the presence of qualified teachers is the most important factor to produce intelligent students. This indicates what needs to be achieved. Moreover, it signals a command which indicates hortatory text.

The above text is fully filled with 'modulation' and 'modality' (Martin, 1985) to modify the position of 'teachers'. Those are; 'teachers are expected to be both knowledgeable' (p.2), 'teachers should be empowered' (p.4), 'teachers are also expected to be able to' (p.11), 'teachers must not infuse' (p.12), 'teachers need to be encouraged'



(p.1. All these show 'hypothetical nature of arguments' (p.26) in which a change is required.

The text is clearly structured and signals the formality. This can be seen through the signposting of ideas e.g. 'appreciation' and 'power sharing' (p.6) and the respective explanation. The vocabulary used in the text denote academic areas realised through the use of nominalisation e.g. 'appropriate teaching methods'(p.3), 'instructional process' (p.3), 'effective teaching techniques'(p.4) etc. Halliday (1985) mentions that nominalisation is one of features of written academic language.

The tone of the text is formal, given academic language used and the change of reasoning given. However, the persuasiveness of the text is mostly marked by hypothetical nature of his arguments which are backed up by elaboration. The elaboration on the notion of "appreciation" (p.7 to p.12) and "sharing" (p.13).

Shared background knowledge, values and understanding

As the text is intended for teachers either from government of private schools, the concept of pedagogy, teaching techniques, teaching methodology, instructional processes, teaching methods as outlined in the texts, may have already been shared by the writer and the reader (Johns, 1997; Paltridge 2001b; Paltridge, 2004)

The accentuated aspect of the text is 'the qualified teacher' as outlined in (p.1), as it is said as "the most important factor", so that all the explanations dealing with the ways in which 'the qualified teacher' is attained becomes the central concerns as well. On the other hand, other facilities such as books, laboratories and libraries are not down played as they are only mentioned and not explained.

Genre relationship with other texts or other genre

Since the topic is about "bettering to teach", this deals with other genre such as "teacher training", "government national curriculum," teacher's professional development etc. This what Bazerman (1994) called as a system of genre, the idea that one genre depends on other genre. Similarly, Swales (2004) refers this idea as genre network, interrelated genre having the same communicative purpose. Furthermore, the text also relates to two scholars' idea, Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, as stated in the fifth paragraph. Bazerman (2004) called this 'technique of intertextual representation' (p.88), the way of citing scholar's idea to support writer's claim. Its intertextuality with other texts can be traced through its related links such as 'education a matter of teacher training', '500 elementary school teachers needed in Mimika', 'alternative to critical thinking education'. Moreover, these interrelated links underline that intertextuality is social practice which is socially regulated, as for example 'Bettering teachers to teach' might facilitate 'critical thinking education' (Fairclough, 1992a;1992b, 1995). This might also exemplify what Halliday and Hassan (1985) say about intertextual context, the relation of text with previous assumption for example about 'the reform of secondary education in Indonesia' (Yeom, Acedo & Utomo, 2002, p.56).

Text III 'Alternative to critical thinking education'

The setting of genre

The text is taken from electronic newspaper "The Jakarta Post", a national English newspaper which is also available in the hard copy form published on 02/24/2010.

The purpose of genre

The text is to persuade the reader that something should be or should not be the case (Gerot and Wignell, 1994), to do a change (Martin, 1985), therefore it is hortatory exposition.

The intended audience

The 'primary readership' audience of this article is the educational policy makers, principle of schools etc, as this suggests an alternative of one of the approach of teaching, critical thinking education. However, the 'secondary readership' can be all that educators, all educational analysts, students etc.

The relationship between participants in the genre

It is again not simple to draw relationship between participants in the genre. The writer may be unknown, but might have equal status with readers. But as it might mostly written for educational policy makers, principals of schools, etc, the relationship could be scholars to educational policy makers, school principles, given the fact that the writer is the assistant of professor in a university.

Expectations, conventions, and requirement for the genre

The commonly features of hortatory text such as thesis as a command, attitudinal verbs, 'spoken-like' text, etc features the text (Martin, 1985; Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Coffin, 2004; Paltridge, 2010).

In this text, the thesis is "Education today is facing a great challenge to empower young generation against rampant social ailments in the country". This thesis indicates an encouragement to do something, which is to empower young generation. This then chain to further reasoning that if already empowered, young generation may create positive change or contribution toward the betterment in the country. Examining this reasoning, it is clear that the text belongs to hortatory exposition. Other attitudinal characteristics such as "a great challenge"(p.1), 'significant deleterious impact'(p.3), 'depraved conduct'(p.3), 'desperately tried'(p.6), 'potential cultural barriers'(p.8), 'mentalistic'(p.10), 'seems more congenial'(p.17), 'chronic corrupt mentality'(p.18), 'cognizant'(p.21), signal writer's feeling and attitude. These sorts of verbs, Martin (1985) says are effective to raise reader's empathy, and make the



text more persuasive. These further indicate writer's personality as well as 'evaluative beliefs' of the writer (Vandijk, 1998, p.29).

Shared background knowledge, values and understanding

Shared background knowledge, values and understanding in this text are 'social ailments' (p.1) keep flourishing such as 'corruption' (p.2), 'bribery' (p.2), 'physical violence' (p.2) etc. These indicate that the role of Indonesian education is still questionable. Thus continuous change of curriculum and its blur might already been shared as well (Welch, 2007). Critical thinking education which in some schools have also already been enacted as opposed to "rote memorization" learning and cultural background underpinning the way students learn in the classroom may also be mutually intelligible as well.

The accentuated aspects in the text are the nature of Critical Thinking Education (CTE) and Critical Practice Education (CPE) themselves and their compatibility with socio-cultural nature of Indonesian students in the lieu of which is more congenial in Indonesian educational context. The only mentioned in the first paragraphs as the background are the 'social ailments' themselves, which are not emphasized. This is only additional information to generate the CPE that is argued fit best (Huckin, 1997)

The relationship of genre to other genre or text

As mentioned in the system of genre (Bazerman, 1994; 2004) and genre network (Swales, 1990; 2004), this text relates to curriculum genre, educational policy genre, examination genre. Similarly to this notion, this text is dependent on other text to make meaning. In internal aspect of the text itself, it directly deals with Paulo freire's notion of CPE (Bazerman, 2004). It also travels intertextually to students' cultural background.

The text also relates to 'critical pedagogies in foreign language education', 'let us remain critical of the presidential hopefuls', 'enlisting educators to uphold multiculturalism', and 'bettering how teachers teach', as shown in its electronic links. CPE might facilitate the teaching of 'critical pedagogy and multiculturalism'. It is likely the way that they are socially linked (Fairclough, 1992a; 1992b, 1995).

Implications for professional practice

In order to be able to produce argumentative text especially hortatory text, students need to be introduced the generic structure of it which is realised through thesis, arguments and re-statement of position and recommendation (Gerot and Wignell 1994; Paltridge 2010; Coffin, 2004). Further, students need to be made aware that hortatory expositions are usually filled with attitudinal verbs which express feeling of which this characterises more spoken text, aiming at persuading the readers (Martin, 1985). Emphasizing the thesis functions as a command rather than statement is worthy of mention as this usually the first aspect to interrogate whether a text is hortatory or not. Series of reasoning, marked by the existence of modality and modulation in the hypothetical nature of argument is of necessary given. Along with this, the usual presence of first pronoun and more 'spoken like' text which is inherent in hortatory text should be taught. Furthermore, it is also worth to note that students

should be given representative examples of hortatory text so that students can learn most (Johns, 1997), but not being prescribed (Bazerman, 1994).

Moreover, it is also worth aspect to make students aware of the setting of genre, the purpose of genre, the intended audience, the relationship between participants in the genre, shared background knowledge, values and understanding, the relationship between genre and other genre or text (Johns, 1997; Paltridge, 2001), so that they can become informed how to comprehend genres.

It is also important to note to make students aware that sometimes writers sometime manipulate genre conventions for special need (Devitt, 1994 cited in Paltridge, et al., 2006) such as the case in three articles from The Jakarta Post above e.g. the variation of generic structures, so that the students are well informed on how to produce written genre along with the understanding of what 'genre allows to do and what it does not allow to do' (Devitt, Reiff & Bawarshi, 2004, p.161) (4062 words).

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