# Texts written in English and Chinese by expert writers: A genre-based comparative study from the Pacific Rim

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**Abstract**
On the basis of the analysis of the structure of text segments occurring in a range of journals, Bruce (2003) proposes four prototypes for the overall rhetorical structure and internal discourse structure of academic texts in English that focus on *explanation, argument, recount* and *classification.* This paper reports on a study involving 20 texts written in Chinese by native speakers of Chinese resident in Taiwan who were judged to be highly competent writers of Chinese. Five of these texts focused on *explanation*; five on *argument*, five on *recount* and five on *classification*. Analysis of these texts in terms of overall rhetorical structuring and internal discourse structuring suggests that texts written in Chinese by competent writers of Chinese may be closer to texts written in English by competent writers of English than is sometimes supposed, something that may have significant implications for the teaching of writing in English to native speakers of Chinese. However, the participants in this study were residents of Taiwan, a country that has had long-term academic and trading links with the USA and one in which most residents have some competence in English. It may be that a similar study involving native speakers of Chinese from other areas would yield different results.

## Introduction to the research

This article reports on a research project whose aim was to explore the overall rhetorical structure and internal discourse structure of texts (between 200 and 250 words) written in Chinese in response to four prompts. Each of the prompts was intended to elicit a text exhibiting a different cognitive/ elemental genre – *explanation, argument, recount* or *classification*. The texts were composed by five writers from Taiwan, all of whom are speakers of Mandarin Chinese as a first language and all of whom were judged to be competent writers of Chinese – four were teachers of Chinese and one was a journalist. The overall rhetorical structure and internal discourse structure of these texts was compared with prototypical structures proposed by Bruce (2003) on the basis of an analysis of texts written in English that appeared in a number of academic journals. It was hoped that this study would provide data of relevance to the design of writing courses for Taiwanese students of English that are based on cognitive/ elemental genres.

## Critical review of selected literature on the teaching of writing: From product through process to post-process

In the first half of the twentieth century, the primary emphasis in teaching and assessing writing tended to be on the final product and, in particular, on morphological and syntactic accuracy. So far as paragraphing was concerned, there was a tendency, whatever the topic, to encourage students to write according to a five paragraph scheme that included an introductory paragraph, a concluding paragraph and three central paragraphs (Nystrand, Greene & Wiemelt, 1993, p. 275). This


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approach to the teaching of writing is now often referred to as 'current-traditional rhetoric' (Fogarty, 1959; Young, 1978, p. 31). It was, however, by no means the only approach adopted. As early as the second decade of the 20th century, there is evidence of the beginnings of a developmental approach (see, for example, Leonard, 1914; 1917). Mills (1953) made reference to writing as process in the early 1950s, and a number of studies reviewed by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Schoer (1963) in the early 1960s had begun to direct attention towards the importance of compositional processes. It was, however, at an Anglo-American conference held at Dartmouth in New England in 1966, a conference that focused on student composition, that the context in which process-based approaches could flourish was established. Following that conference, Dixon (1967) published an extremely influential book that stresses the importance of learning to write through the experience of writing, through focusing on the processes that writers undergo as they attempt to produce texts. This redirection of emphasis in the teaching of writing, which was initially directed almost exclusively towards the teaching of writing in English to native speakers of English, was more fully developed in a work produced by Emig (1971) that focused on the compositional processes of twelfth grade students. All of this led to reduced emphasis on mechanical aspects of writing and increased emphasis on the processes thought to be involved in writing, particularly in relation to the teaching of first language writing to young learners. So far as the teaching of writing in a second/ additional language is concerned, process-centred approaches made inroads only very gradually.

As a number of researchers have pointed out (see, for example, Bizzell, 1986; Faigley, 1986; Hairston, 1882), there are many different approaches to the teaching of writing. Thus, for example, Elbow's (1973, p. 6) emphasis on what he refers to as 'free writing' is not shared by all of those involved in process-centred approaches to the teaching of writing. Even so, there can be little doubt that most of them see writing as primarily problem solving (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 370; Hayes & Flower, 1980, p. 3; Odell, 1980, p. 140), and agree that it should be taught in a positive, encouraging, co-operative environment, with interference kept to a minimum (Gould, 1980; Odell, 1980; Raimes, 1983, 1985; Zamel, 1983) so as to reduce the cognitive strain that is inevitably involved (Flower & Hayes, 1980, pp. 31-32; Silva, 1990, p. 15). For many, writing is conceptualized as involving a number of overlapping and recursive processes - *prewriting* (gathering ideas and planning)*, drafting*, *revising*, *editing* and *publishing* (sharing a final version with others. However, although it has sometimes been claimed that the processes that are focused on in the teaching of writing are cognitive ones (Atkinson, 2003, p. 10; Bereiter, 1980, p. 78) that are grounded in cognitive psychology (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 84), it has been argued that there is no theoretical justification for such claims (North, 1987; Susser, 1993), and, furthermore, that "there is actually little hard evidence that process-writing techniques lead to significantly better writing" (Hyland, 2002, p. 29).

It is important to recognize that although reference is sometimes made to the process approach, as if it were some sort of unitary phenomenon (see Hairston, 1982), this is, in many ways, as much of a myth as is the notion that 'current-traditional rhetoric' is some sort of unitary phenomenon. There are, as has been pointed out by, among others, Bizzell (1986) and Faigley (1986), a multiplicity of approaches that claim to be process-oriented. As Tobin (1994, p.4) observes, "a misleading image of unity and coherence" has often been presented in the context of process pedagogy. The same is true of what is often now referred to as 'post-process' pedagogy, which as Matsuda

(2003, p. 65) argues, is actually no more than "a heuristic for expanding the scope of the field of second language writing" and "needs to be understood not as the rejection of process but as the recognition of the multiplicity of L2 writing theories and pedagogies".

Although it is generally recognised that process-centred approaches to the teaching of writing have something useful to offer, there are many who now believe that they are lacking in a number of important respects, particularly as a primary basis for teaching writing to learners of second/ additional languages. It has, for example, been argued that the processes involved in L1 and L2 writing are not the same (see, for example, Arndt, 1987; Wolff, 2000). Those who believe that it is important to fully accommodate "the constraints imposed by imperfect knowledge of the language code involved" in the case of novice L2 writers (Caudery, 1995, ¶41), now often argue that there is a need for "a specific methodological approach which is different from the L1 approach" (Wolff, 2000, p. 107). As both Silva (1993, p. 669) and Susser (1994, p. 39) point out, process-centred approaches were developed primarily with novice L1 writers in mind and inadequate knowledge of the L2 may have a negative impact on a novice writer's ability to benefit from such approaches. So far as novice L2 writers are concerned, assistance with the logical organization of ideas can be of fundamental importance (Ferris, 2003), as can assistance in the areas of lexical and grammatical development (Badger & White, 2000, p. 15).

So far as *both* L1 and L2 writers are concerned, it has been argued that process-centred approaches "[fail] to introduce [them] to the cultural and linguistic resources necessary for them to engage critically with texts" (Hyland, 2003, p. 20) and may result in students failing to develop an adequate understanding of contextualized language knowledge (Knapp & Watkins, 2005, pp. 8 & 14). They may, for example, lack adequate lexical, grammatical and text construction skills (Hinkel, 2004, p. 7) and may, as a result, be judged negatively in academic and employment contexts (Shine, 2008, p. 564). Furthermore, although students from some cultural backgrounds may flourish in contexts where creativity and experimentation are emphasised, students from other cultural backgrounds may prefer to be provided with more direction (Reid, 2001, p. 145). Whatever the context, many of those who reject approaches to the teaching of writing that focus on compositional processes argue that novice writers have the right to expect explicit and informed guidance. It is this, above all, that has led to the development of approaches to writing that are often referred to as 'post-process' approaches.

What approaches to the teaching of writing that have been referred to as 'post process' approaches have in common is "the rejection of the dominance of process at the expense of other aspects of writing and writing instruction" (Matsuda, 2003, pp. 78-79). Although approaches that have this in common may differ in significant ways from one another, many of them rely heavily on research in the area of genre. In fact, genre-centred approaches are generally considered to be "the main institutionalized alternative to process pedagogy currently on offer" (Atkinson, 2003, p. 11). Genre-centred approaches to the teaching of writing can themselves differ from one another in fundamental ways, focusing on what Bruce (2003, pp. 4-5) refers to as 'social genres' or on what he refers to as 'cognitive genres':

> *Social genres* are similar in type to the category of *text genre* proposed by Pilegaard and Frandsen (1996), referring to socially recognised constructs according to which whole texts are classified in terms of their overall social purpose. Thus, for example, personal letters, novels and academic articles are examples of different social genres. . . .
>
> The term *cognitive genre* is used to refer to what Pilegaard and Frandsen (1996) label *text type*. As examples, they cite: "narrative, expository, descriptive, argumentative or instructional text types" (Pilegaard & Frandsen, 1996. p. 3).

It is on the first of these (social genres) that many approaches to the teaching of writing focus. Thus, for example, Henry and Roseberry (1998) conducted a study in Brunei that involved two groups of sixteen first year university students who were involved in writing expository texts of between 150 and 200 words intended for tourists. Both groups were provided with six hours of writing instruction over a three week period. The texts produced at the end of the course by that group of students showed greater control of rhetorical structure and linguistic features (including topic, topic-shift, connectivity and the inclusion of obligatory moves) than did the texts produced by the other group of students (pp. 154-155). Another example focusing on social genres is a study conducted by Lin (2009) involving fourth grade students attending an elementary school in Taiwan. Participants were divided into two groups, an experimental group and a control group, with members of the experimental group only being provided with structural guidelines on writing summaries of narratives they had read and on writing their own stories. Analysis of pre-tests and post-tests indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of "content . . . organization . . . text length and . . . language use" (p. 81).

Of particular relevance so far as the present study is concerned are studies that focus on cognitive genres (referred to by Hyland (2007, p. 153) as 'elemental genres'). It is on cognitive genres that both Derewianka (1994) and Knapp and Watkins (1994) focus in their discussion of approaches to the teaching of writing to young learners. In each case, this focus on cognitive genres is accompanied by a focus on structural elements and linguistic features with which these cognitive genres are typically associated. Thus, for example, Derewianka (1994) associates recount, in the case of texts in English produced by young learners, with the chronological sequencing of events (and the occurrence of signals of sequence and overlap such as 'then' and 'at the same time'), action verbs (often in simple past tense form), and the provision of background information about participants and circumstances. For Derewianka (2003, p. 140), a critical aspect of this type of approach is that it focuses on the way in which "the creation of meaning at the level of the whole text" helps students to "become aware of how the grammar is creating particular meanings relevant to the genre in question". In a study involving 35 students in their second year of study at a university in Indonesia, Rozimela (2004) provided a two and a half month course focusing on argumentative writing. Comparison of texts written by the students at the beginning and end of the course indicated enhanced understanding of schematic structure, improved development of the argument sections of the texts and more accurate use of those grammatical structures associated with this genre that had been discussed in class. On the basis of a study involving 26 first year university students majoring in English who were provided with explicit instruction in aspects of the

narrative genre over a four week period, Cheng (2008) concluded that even limited exposure to genre-centered writing instruction can lead to overall improvement in the quality of texts and to increased awareness of the interaction between text-type and language functions (p. 173).

According to Lemke (1994, p. 11), genre-centered approaches to writing instruction teach learners "to dissect a text into its component parts, and to construct a text from its component parts, emphasizing an explicit understanding of the parts, their relations to one another, and the functions of parts and the whole in their contexts".

**Background to the research**

A number of researchers have identified particular cognitive genres that are frequently associated with academic writing. On the basis of the research of Biber (1989) and Quinn (1993), Bruce (2003, p.14) identified four Rhetorical Types (RTs) associated with academic writing in English which he referred to as follows: *Report; Explanation; Discussion; Recount.* He searched a corpus of 20 academic journal articles (randomly selected from a population of 99) for occurrences of these four RTs, identifying 71 instances: Report (19); Explanation (16); Discussion (19); and Recount (17). He then analysed each of these in terms of overall rhetorical structure and internal discourse patterning.[1] In analysing overall rhetorical structuring, he made reference to the rhetorical patterns proposed by Hoey (1983) and outlined in *Table 1* below.

***Table 1***: *Rhetorical patterns identified by Hoey (1983)*

| Label | Rhetorical Segments | Nuclear (obligatory) segments | Prototypical pattern |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PSn**<br>**(Problem-Solution)** | **S** (Situation)<br>**P** (Problem: aspect of *situation* requiring a response)<br>**Sn** (Solution/ Response to Situation)<br>**Ev** (Evaluation of response) | **P**<br>**Sn** | *S-P-Sn-Ev* |
| **Matching:**<br>(Matching compatibility<br>OR<br>Matching contrast) | **S** (segment)<br>**CompS** (compatible segment);<br>**S** (segment)<br>**ContS** (contrasting segment) | **S**<br>**CompS;**<br>**S**<br>**ContS** | **S-CompS;**<br>**S-ContS** |
| **General-Particular**<br>(Generalization-Example<br>OR<br>Preview-Details) | **G** (generalization)<br>**Ex** (example)<br>OR<br>**T** (topic)<br>**R** (restriction)<br>**I** (illustration)<br>OR<br>**P** (preview)<br>**D** (details) | **G-Ex;**<br>**T-R**<br>OR<br>**T-I;**<br>**P-D** | |

In analysing internal discourse structuring, Bruce (2003) made reference to a taxonomy of cognitive processes and semantic relations presented by Crombie (1985 & 1987) as outlined in ***Table 2*** below.[2]

***Table 2**: Cognitive processes and semantic relations (Crombie, 1985, 1987) as presented by Bruce (2003, p. 246)*

| Cognitive processes | Associative (comparison/ contrast) | Logico-deductive (cause and effect) | Tempero-contigual (time and space) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Semantic relations** | Simple contrast;<br>Simple comparison;<br>Statement – Affirmation;<br>Statement-Exception;<br>Statement-Example;<br>Statement-Denial;<br>Denial – Correction;<br>Concession-Contraexpectation;<br>Supplementary alternation;<br>Contrastive alternation;<br>Amplification | Condition-Consequence;<br>Means-Purpose;<br>Reason-Result;<br>Means-Result;<br>Grounds-Conclusion | Chronological sequence;<br>Temporal overlap;<br>Bonding |

*On* the basis of his analysis, Bruce (2003) proposed a typical patterning for each RT as outlined in *Table 3* below (in which two of the labels used by Bruce (2003) have been replaced by 'classification' and 'argument').

***Table 3:** Findings of analysis of academic article-based corpus (see Bruce, 2003, p. 265)*

| Rhetorical Type (RT) | Report (Classification) | Explanation | Discussion (Argument) | Recount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall rhetorical structure** | *General – Particular (Preview – Details)* | *General – Particular (Preview – Details)* | *General – Particular (Generalization-Examples* ) **and** *Matching* | *Problem - Solution* |
| **Internal discourse structure (cognitive processes) (calculations include Bonding relations, as exemplars of tempero-contigual processes)** | Tempero-contigual (59%)<br>Associative (26%)<br>Logico-deductive (15%) | Tempero-contigual (60%);<br>Associative and Logico-deductive (20% each) | Tempero-contigual (46%);<br>Associative (27%);<br>Logico-Deductive (26%) | Tempero-Contigual (60%);<br>Associative & Logico-Deductive (20% each) |
| **Internal discourse structure (specific semantic relations)** (Bonding (the most commonly occurring relation) removed; Only relations with 10% or more included) | Amplification (approx. 18%);<br>Reason-Result & Grounds-Conclusion combined (approx. 17%);<br>Simple Contrast & Simple Comparison combined (approx. 15%); Concession-Contraexpectation (approx. 10%);<br>Condition-Consequence (approx. 10%) | Means-Purpose & Means-Result combined (approx. 29%);<br>Amplification (approx. 17%);<br>Concession-Contraexpectation (approx. 12.5%) | Grounds-Conclusion & Reason-Result combined (26%);<br>Means-Purpose & Means-Result combined (approx. 22%);<br>Concession-Contraexpectation (approx. 19%) | Means-Purpose & Means-Result combined (approx. 19%);<br>Amplification (approx. 17%);<br>Chronological Sequence (approx. 15.5%);<br>Grounds-Conclusion & Reason-Result combined (approx. 14.5%) |

Bruce (2003) then asked a number of subjects (New Zealand-based English teachers who were graduates and native speakers of English; students in the final year of school or first year of university who were native speakers of English; first year

university students (largely from East Asian countries) who were not native speakers of English) to write texts of between 200 and 250 words in response to prompts. The prompts, outlined in *Appendix 2*, were intended to elicit texts that related to particular RTs (see Bruce, 2003, p. 263):

- reporting data from a numerical table (*Classification RT*)[3];
- explaining a diagram conveying information about the means by which something is achieved (*Explanation RT*);
- discussing both sides of an issue (*Argument RT*)[4]; and,
- recounting a sequence of events (*Recount RT*).

Bruce's (2003, pp. 263 – 264) overall aim was to determine the extent to which the organisational features present in the samples of writing conformed to those identified in the proposed prototype models of the four Rhetorical Types. In order to do this, there was a need to establish prototypicality ratings. The prototypicality rating schedules for overall rhetorical structure are outlined in *Table 4* below.

***Table 4**: Overall rhetorical structuring: Prototypicality rating schedule as calculated by Bruce (2003, pp. 273, 285, 295, 306)*

| | **Rating 1** | **Rating 2** | **Rating 3** | **Rating 4** | **Rating 5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Classification** | Closely follows a *Preview Details* discourse pattern. | Mainly follows a *Preview Details* discourse pattern, but incorporates *Problem Solution* within the *Details* section. | Begins with a general topic statement about the data followed by a *Details* section. | Consists solely of a *Details* section, no introductory *Preview* or general section. | No clear discourse pattern. |
| **Explanation** | Closely follows a *Preview - Details* discourse pattern | Follows a *Preview - Details* discourse pattern but *Preview* section is minimal. | No *Preview* or introductory section; but contains a *Details* section. | No clear discourse pattern. | |
| **Argument** | Closely adheres to *Generalisation Example* discourse pattern with several *Matching* sections | Generally adheres to *Generalisation Example* discourse pattern with some occurrence of *Matching* sections . | Has a some form of a *General - Particular* pattern but does not employ *Matching* to contrast viewpoints | Has *a General - Particular* pattern, but adds a *Problem – Solution* discourse pattern as an additional organisational pattern. | Uses an overall pattern other than *Generalization-Example* |
| **Recount** | The whole text closely adheres to *Problem - Solution* pattern | Most of the text has a *Problem - Solution* pattern | At least one *Problem - Solution* pattern appears in the text | The text has no features of a *Problem - Solution* discourse pattern | No clear discourse pattern. |

Establishing prototypicality ratings for internal discourse structuring was more problematic. In this case, where 10% or more of the semantic relations in the academic article-based corpus were of a particular type (e.g. *Amplification*) or belonged to a particular group (e.g. *Reason-Result and Grounds-Conclusion*

combined), these relations were considered to be prototypical. The percentage occurrence of these relations or relational groupings and of the perceptual categories to which they belong (associative; logico-deductive and tempero-contigual) was then compared with the percentage occurrence in texts written by members of each of the three groups in the study (native speaker teacher group; native speaker student group; non-native speaker student group). Finally "to establish categories of prototypicality in the use of semantic relations in the sample of Report RT responses, a descriptor number was assigned to each response in relation to its overall use of the cognitive processes and semantic relations of the model. The descriptors were calculated on the basis of texts in the corpus of between 200 and 250 words containing approximately 16 semantic relations (including Bonding) and 11 semantic relations if Bonding is removed" (Bruce, 2003, pp. 278 – 279). On the basis of the number of occurrences of each of these relations or relational groupings in the corpus, an average number in each text was then calculated and this was used as the basis for establishing prototypicality ratings (see *Table 5* below).

***Table 5**: Internal discourse structuring: Prototypicality rating schedule as calculated by Bruce (2003, p. 279, 290, 301,311*)

| | **Prototypicality Rating 1** | **Proto-typicality Rating 2** | **Proto-typicality Rating 3** | **Proto-typicality Rating 4** | **Proto-typicality Rating 5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Classification** | Amplification (x2); Reason – Result and/or Grounds Conclusion (x2); Simple Contrast and/or Simple Comparison (x 2); Concession – Contraexpectation/ Condition-Consequence[5] (x 1) | 6 or 7 of these | 4 or 5 of these | 2 or 3 of these | 1 or none of these |
| **Explanation** | Means – Purpose and/or Means – Result (x3); Reason – Result and/or Grounds – Conclusion (x 3); Concession – Contraexpectation (x 1) | 5 or 6 of these | 3 or 4 of these | 1 or 2 of these | None of these |
| **Argument** | Means – Purpose and/or Means Result (x 2 or x 3); Reason – Result and/or Grounds – Conclusion (x 3); Concession Contraexpectation (x 1) | 5 of these | 4 of these | 3 of these | 2 or fewer of these |
| **Recount** | Means – Purpose and/or Means Result (x 2); Amplification (x 2); Chronological Sequence (x 2); Reason – Result and/or Grounds – Conclusion (x 2). | 7 of these | 6 of these | 5 of these | 4 or fewer of these |

The prototypicality ratings for Bruce's study as they relate to graduate teachers of English who are native speakers of English are provided in *Table 6* below.

***Table 6:** Bruce's (2003) study: Texts written by graduate teachers of English who are native speakers of English - percentages of texts written with prototypicality ratings from 1 (closest to the prototype) to 5 (furthest from the prototype)*

| | **Overall rhetorical structure** | | | | | **Internal discourse structure** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| ***Classification*** | *68%* | *20%* | *12%* | *4%* | - | *12%* | *28%* | *28%* | *18%* | - |
| ***Explanation*** | *56.6%* | *34.7%* | *8.7%* | - | - | *13%* | *30.5%* | *30.5%* | *26%* | - |
| ***Argument*** | *58%* | *4%* | *17%* | *21%* | - | *54%* | *33.5%* | *12.5%* | - | - |
| ***Recount*** | *80%* | *12%* | *8%* | - | - | *36%* | *40%* | *24%* | - | - |

## Research outline and rationale

### *Rationale for the research*

There is a considerable body of research in the area of contrastive rhetoric that indicates that linguistic and cultural background play an important role in the ways in which texts belonging to different genres are structured. However, much of that research relates to texts that exhibit a number of what are referred to here as 'social genres' (that is, genres such as *myths, business letters* or *lullabies* that are defined in terms of the social and cultural purposes they are intended to serve). Texts belonging to any particular social genre are made up of one or more of what are referred to by Bruce (2003) as 'cognitive genres' and by Hyland (2007) as 'elemental genres' such as *recount* and *argument.* Thus, for example, in the process of writing a *personal letter* to a friend (an example of a social genre), a writer may *recount* what happened recently (e.g. during a home visit by a heating consultant) and *argue* (e.g. in favour of the installation of a heat pump in the friend's new home). From this perspective, cognitive/elemental genres, several of which have been particularly associated with academic writing, can be described as the 'building blocks' of text construction. For those involved in learning to write texts, whether in a first or additional language, an initial focus on these building blocks (cognitive/ elemental genres) can be extremely productive. However, the ways in which writers construct texts in their first language may impact on the ways in which they construct texts in other languages. It is therefore important to analyse texts of similar types written in different languages by competent writers of these languages in order to determine whether there are any differences in the ways in which they are constructed. Awareness of any such differences can help students to make informed decisions about their own writing. Thus, for example, a Taiwanese student who is preparing to undertake graduate study in New Zealand may be well advised to focus on learning to structure academic texts in a way that conforms to the typical structuring of such texts in New Zealand, whereas a Taiwanese student who is preparing to undertake graduate study through the medium of English in Taiwan may prefer to focus on learning to structure academic texts in a way that conforms to the typical structuring of such texts in Taiwan. The research reported here is intended to provide information that can inform such decisions and can play a role in the design of writing courses in which cognitive genres play a central role.

### *Research questions and research methods*

The research questions that underpin the research reported here are:

1. In terms of overall rhetorical structuring and internal discourse patterning, in what ways, if any, do ***texts written in Chinese by a sample of competent writers of Chinese*** who are native speakers of Chinese differ from the prototype models established for texts written in English by Bruce (2003)?
2. What contribution could the findings of this study make to the design of genre-centred writing courses intended for Taiwanese students of English who are involved in general (rather than subject-specific) academic writing courses?

### *Research participants*

I selected five research participants. All of them were native speakers of Chinese who were resident in Taiwan. Four of them were teachers of Chinese; one was a journalist.

I asked each of these five participants to write four texts in Chinese (of between 200 and 250 words each) in response to four different text prompts. Except in one case (where changes were made to make a particular prompt more appropriate for use in a Taiwanese context), these prompts were translations into Chinese of the text prompts designed by Bruce (2003) to elicit texts whose primary focus was *report (classification), explanation, discussion (argument)* or *recount*. This resulted in five texts that focused on report (classification), five that focused on explanation, five that focused on discussion (argument) and five that focused on explanation and five that focused on recount.

***The text prompts***

Each research participant was asked to write four texts (of between 200 and 250 words in length) in response to four different text prompts, each of which was designed to elicit a text representing a different cognitive genre (classification; explanation; argument; recount). The text prompts were the same as those used by Bruce (2003) (see *Appendix 2*) except that (a) few small changes intended to make them more relevant to Taiwanese research participants, and (b) they were translated into Chinese.

***Text analysis***

I then analysed each text belonging to each group of texts in terms of overall rhetorical structuring and internal discourse structuring and compared the findings for the group as a whole with the prototypical model for each Rhetorical Type (RT) established by Bruce (2003).

## The research findings

The prototypicality ratings for the texts written in Chinese are outlined in Table 7 below (where 1 = highly prototypical and 5 = least prototypical, and the percentage of texts in each category that is assigned to each prototypicality rating is provided).

***Table 7***: *Prototypicality ratings*

| | **Overall rhetorical structure** | | | | | **Internal discourse structure** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Classification** | - | *40%* | *60%* | - | - | | *40%* | *60%* | - | - |
| **Explanation** | *60%* | *40%* | - | - | - | *40%* | *20%* | *20%* | | *20%* |
| **Argument** | *80%* | *20%* | - | - | - | *60%* | *20%* | *20%* | - | - |
| **Recount** | *100%* | - | - | - | - | *100%* | - | - | - | - |

## Discussion

The findings reported above are based on a small number of text samples only – 20 texts (five representing each RT) - written in Chinese by native speakers of Chinese resident in Taiwan who are competent writers of Chinese. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that:

- in terms of *both overall rhetorical structure and internal discourse structure*, all of the ***recount*** texts in Chinese conform to the prototype for academic recount texts in English proposed by Bruce;
- in terms of *overall rhetorical structure*, all except one of the ***argument*** texts in Chinese conform to the prototype for academic argument texts in English proposed by Bruce, with, in terms of *internal discourse structure,* three of the five conforming to the prototype and a further one being very close to it;

- in terms of *overall rhetorical structure*, three of the ***explanation*** texts in Chinese conform to the prototype for academic explanation texts in English proposed by Bruce, with the remaining two being very close to it and, in terms of *internal discourse structure*, two of the five conform to the prototype, a further one being very close to it;

The major differences relate to the structure of the ***classification*** texts. However, although none of the classification texts in Chinese conforms to the prototype for academic classification texts in English proposed by Bruce, two of them, in terms of *both overall rhetorical structure and internal discourse structure*, are very close to it.
In view of the close academic and trade links between Taiwan and the US, it may be that the structure of texts written in Chinese by residents of Taiwan has been influenced by the structure of texts written in English. Studies of a similar type involving native speakers of Chinese from other areas might yield different results. Furthermore, more extensive studies of the Chinese writing of Taiwanese residents would be required before any definite conclusions could be reached. If such studies reinforced the findings of this one so far as Taiwan is concerned, there would be significant implications for the design of genre-based writing courses for learners of English in Taiwan. If the findings of this study were replicated in studies involving Chinese writers from a range of different areas, there would be significant implications for the design of genre-based writing courses for native speakers of Chinese more generally. Furthermore, similar studies involving texts written by competent writers of other languages from a range of cultural backgrounds could have much to offer in relation to the teaching of writing in first and additional languages.

## Endnotes

**1.** Bruce (2003) also analysed these texts in terms of gestalt structuring (e.g. WHOLE-PART; SOURCE-PATH-GOAL) but that aspect of his analysis, and its use in his subsequent research, has been excluded from consideration here.
**2.** For examples of each of these semantic relations, see *Appendix 1*.
**3.** Referred to by Bruce (2003) as 'Report RT'.
**4.** Referred to by Bruce (2003) as 'Discussion RT'.
**5.** There was clearly an error in prototypicality rating 1 for the Classification RT. *Condition-Consequence* should have been included but was not. As I was keen to compare my findings with those of Bruce (2003), this presented a problem for me. I decided that the best way to deal with it would be to count one instance of ***either*** *Concession-Contraexpectation* ***or*** *Condition-Consequence* as making up Prototypicality Rating 1 (Report RT), leaving all other rating descriptors unaltered.

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***Appendix 1:*** *Examples of semantic relations*

| **Semantic relations** | **Examples** |
|---|---|
| *Simple Contrast* | The common cold is a minor infection of the nose and throat; influenza is a more serious infection involving the lungs. |
| *Simple Comparison* | Both the common cold and influenza are illnesses caused by infection by a virus. |
| *Statement-Affirmation* | She said he was wrong and I agree. |
| *Statement-Exception* | All of the buildings leak except the one built by my company. |
| *Statement-Example* | He never considers others. For example, he ignored Anne's request for help. |
| *Statement-Denial* | She said he was wrong but I disagree. |
| *Denial-Correction* | He's not a priest; he's a soldier. |
| *Concession-Contraexpectation* | Although it's hot, he's wearing heavy clothing. |
| *Supplementary Alternation* | You could mow the lawn or cut back the roses. |
| *Contrastive Alternation* | You can go or stay. |
| *Amplification* | Atoms are made up of smaller particles. The three main particles that atoms are made of are protons, neutrons and electrons. |
| *Condition-Consequence* | If you install a security alarm, your home will be safer. |
| *Means-Purpose* | He installed a security alarm in order to make his home safer. |
| *Reason-Result* | Because he installed a security alarm, his home is safer now. |
| *Means-Result* | By installing a security alarm, he made his home safer. |
| *Grounds-Conclusion* | He installed a security alarm so his home must be safer now. |
| *Chronological Sequence* | He found the fault and then turned off the computer. |
| *Temporal Overlap* | He sang while he repaired the fault. |
| *Bonding* | She found a pair of shoes and a broken pen. |

***Appendix 2:*** *Text prompts included in Bruce (2003, pp. 403-406)*

**WRITING TASK 1**

The following table shows data about road deaths in New Zealand for one year.

**Road Deaths in NZ - 12 months to April 1997**

**Type of Road User**

| Age group | Driver | Passenger | Motorcyclist | Pedestrian | Cyclist | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0-4 years | | 15 | | 5 | | |
| 5-9 years | | 7 | 1 | 7 | 3 | |
| 10-14 years | | 11 | | 4 | 4 | |
| 15-19 years | 31 | 44 | 13 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 20-24 years | 41 | 17 | 12 | 4 | | |
| 25-39 years | 83 | 39 | 18 | 12 | 2 | |
| 40-49 years | 52 | 18 | 5 | 6 | 2 | |
| 60+years | 45 | 27 | 2 | 13 | 3 | |
| Unknown | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| Total | 253 | 178 | 51 | 57 | 17 | 1 |

- *Write a brief report in paragraphs on the basis of the data in the table.*

  (200 words)

- *Spend as much time as you wish on the task up to a maximum of 30 minutes*

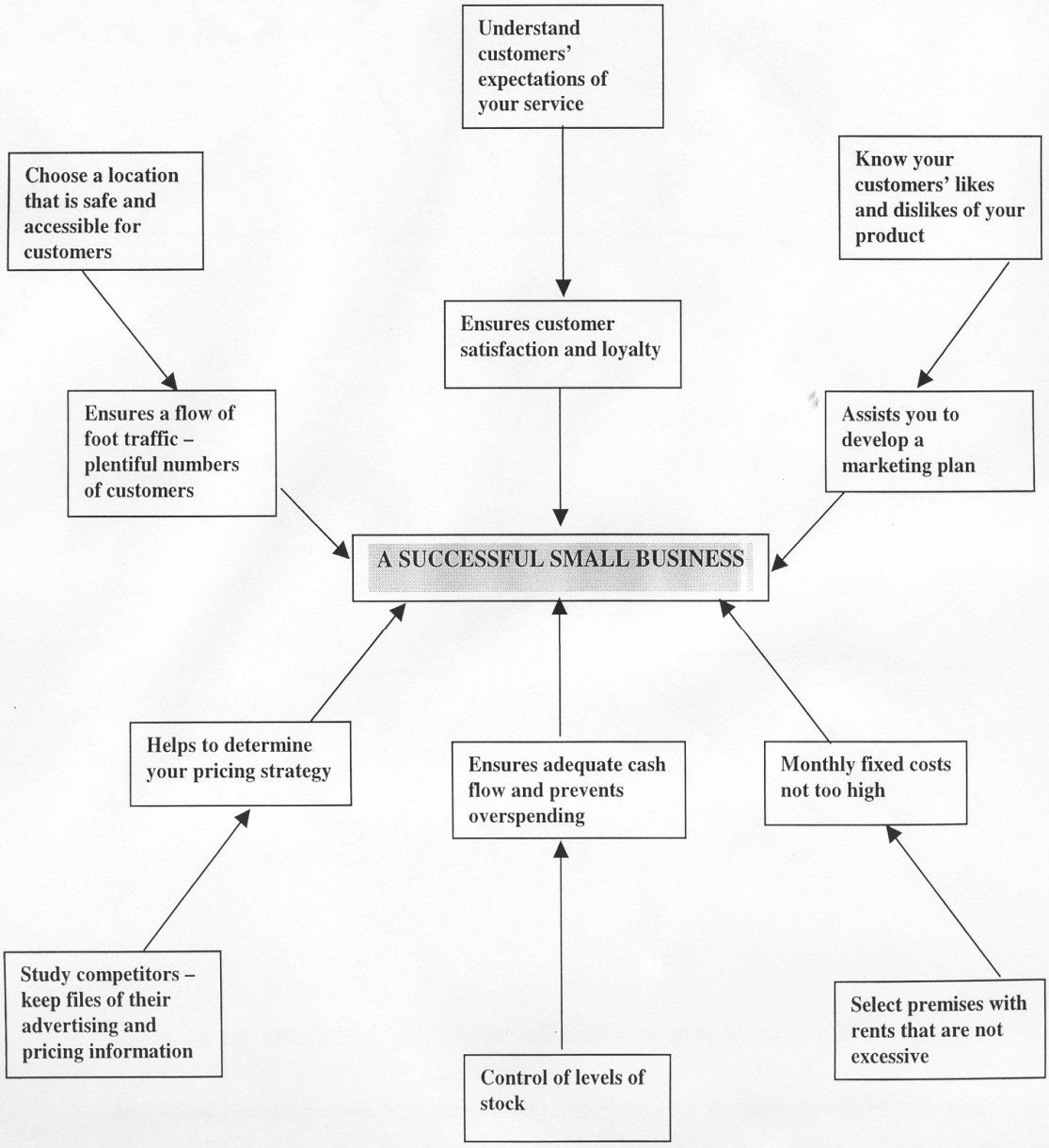
- *Assume that the table accompanies your report and you are able to refer to it directly*

**WRITING TASK 2**

The following diagram shows advice to people who are starting a small business.

- ***Express the advice below in an explanation organised in paragraphs (approximately 250 words).***
- ***Spend as much time as you wish on the task up to a maximum of 30 minutes***
- ***Assume the diagram accompanies you explanation and you are able to refer to it.***

**KEY FACTORS IN RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL SMALL BUSINESS**



**WRITING TASK 3**

**The New Zealand Government should restrict the number of admissions of New Zealanders to university degree programmes as there are insufficient employment opportunities for university graduates in New Zealand today.**

***Compare and contrast arguments for and against this proposition.***

***(Write approximately 250 words.)***

Note that 'the New Zealand government' was replaced by 'the government of Taiwan' (translated into Chinese) in the version used in this study.

**WRITING TASK 4**

**Here is some information about the development of the Japanese economy since World War 2 The information is not organised in any particular way.**

**What is the likely future of the Japanese economy?**

long slow restructuring
- loss of national confidence / identity (which is built on the economic success of the modern state).

**What was the state of the Japanese economy in 1945, at the end of World War 2?**

Starvation rations
- Japan's merchant fleet destroyed
- Japan was cut off from its food suppliers (China, Korea, Formosa )

**What was the situation of the Japanese economy in 1990?**

**GDP**[1]- second highest in the world
- twice that of Germany
- 70% that of the USA
- GDP per capita- third highest in the world

**What is the state of the Japanese economy in the year 2000?**

decade of stagnant performance
- since 1990 the government spent ¥20 billion in ten spending packages to simulate the economy in the present recession.
- the government gross debt 130% of GDP in 1999 (worst in the **OECD**[2])
- incapable of growth, currently massive misallocation of capital, labour, and technology.

**How did the Japanese economy develop during the Post War Period?**

Development based on a social contract between the Government, banks, corporate sector, the people.
- Government directed banks to invest in strategic sectors
- Corporate sector promised lifelong employment
- People maintained high rates of savings

- ***Write a paragraphed recount about the development of the Japanese economy (up to 200 words).***
- ***Spend as much time as you wish on the topic up to a maximum of 30 minutes.***

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[1] **GDP = gross domestic product (the total value of a the goods or services produced in a country)**
[2] **OECD = *The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.* An organistion of the world's 24 developed countries.**