

Using spoken genres to develop bilingualism in pre-school children

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Reference data

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The purpose of this paper is to show how genre theory can be used to assist the English language development of bilingual children. First, a brief outline of genre theory is given. Following this, a case study is presented of two bilingual children, demonstrating how the theory merges with the practice. In particular, how the children begin to develop diversity in oral English communication, by learning to speak in different ways in order to achieve different purposes. Drawing on data of the two children, attention is placed on five common genres and the roles they play in English language development. Following this, various implications for bilingualism are then discussed.

この論文の目的は、ジャンル説が、どうバイリンガルチルドレンの英語発達に働くかを示すものである。始めに、簡単なジャンル説のアウトラインを提供します。これに続きその説が、どうその練習と併合するか証明する、二人のバイリンガルチルドレンのケーススタディーが提供されます。特に色々な方法や色々な目的に沿って話すと言う事を学ぶ事により、どう子供達の口頭英語コミュニケーションが多様に発達し始めたか。二人の子供のデータを描きます。注目する点は、一般的な5つのジャンルと英語学発達におけるジャンルの役割です。これに続き、バイリンガリズムの色々な掛かり合いがそれから論議されます。

This paper describes how genre theory can be used to assist the English language development of pre-school, bilingual children. The paper focuses on two Japanese-English bilingual children living in Tokyo. Because Japanese is considered to be their mother tongue, the maintenance of English is the main concern of the children's parents. Thus, the focus of this paper is on how genre is used to develop the children's spoken English language skills. By exposing them to five common genres, the paper examines how the children develop diversity in English by learning to speak in different ways in order to achieve different purposes.

Genre theory

Genre theory comes from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and is a social interactionist view of language (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). This means that language is both learned and developed through the various ways it is used in social interactions. The term genre represents the various social purposes of language (Eggins & Slade, 1997). Within an SFL paradigm, genre is defined by Martin (2003) as a staged, goal-oriented, social process. In this definition, the term “staged” refers to the patterning of a spoken text. That is, the steps that a text moves through to achieve its purpose (Eggins & Slade, 1997). Some of these steps are compulsory; other steps are optional (Eggins & Slade, 1997). The stages or the patterning of a text are referred to as its generic structure. The generic structure of each genre is organized in such a way as to achieve its social purpose. This notion is considered to be very important in this paper. For example, the social purpose of an opinion genre is to argue a point of view. Typically, in English-speaking cultures, an opinion genre would usually have a pattern that begins with a reaction (to the opinion being expressed), followed by reasons or evidence to support the reaction, and finally a resolution that re-emphasizes the initial reaction (Eggins & Slade, 1997) (see Appendix 1). However, the social purpose of an anecdote is very different. The purpose of this genre is to tell a story that has an open-ended conclusion (see Appendix 1). Therefore, because the purpose is different, the generic structure of an anecdote genre tends to be very different from that of an opinion genre. In this way, the generic structure or text patterning tends to reflect the social purpose of the genre (Martin, 1989). As the purpose changes,

so too does the text’s generic structure. Thus, in an SFL paradigm, if children are able to recognize and use generic structure appropriately, then it can be argued that they have understood the social purpose of that genre.

For children, it is important to make the generic structure of different genres as explicit as possible. As Vygotsky (1978) and Gibbons (2002) suggest, there is no guarantee that young learners will necessarily be able to work it out for themselves. Learners, even very young learners, need to know how to organize their language in different ways that are appropriate to their different purposes of speaking. Thus, in this paper, it can be argued that the pre-school children would be developing diversity in speaking, if they are able to independently organize their language in different ways that are appropriate to their different purposes of speaking.

In SFL, meaning occurs at the level of a text. Thus, SFL is referred to as a text-based grammar (Martin & Rose, 2003). In this paper, different kinds of texts that reflect different social purposes will be referred to as genres. A text can be either spoken (such as a conversation dialog) or written. In this paper, focus will be placed on the construction of spoken texts. SFL goes beyond the sentence level of most traditional grammars and is concerned with how texts are constructed to achieve their social purposes. That is, how texts are organized in different ways to achieve different purposes. By making the generic structure of these texts explicit, learners can recognize different ways of speaking and develop greater diversity in their use of spoken language.

According to Eggins & Slade (1997), casual conversation consists of different types of talk; the “chat” and the “chunks.” The “chat” sections are those types of casual talk

that do not display generic structure or patterning. These are concerned with developing interpersonal relationships, such as bonding and expressing solidarity. The “chunks” are those types of longer talk that have an identifiable, generic structure. Examples of “chunks” are opinion genres and the different kinds of story-telling genres that exist in English. It is the “chunks” that this paper will focus on.

Five common genres of English casual conversation

In this paper, the children have been exposed to five common genres of English casual conversation. These were selected based on the children’s perceived needs and interests in everyday, English casual conversation. The genres selected were narrative, anecdote, exemplum, recount and opinion (Eggs & Slade, 1997). The generic structure, the social purpose, and the language features of each of these five genres have been described in Appendix 1.

With the exception of opinion, the genres are all different kinds of story-telling genres (Eggs & Slade, 1997). The purpose of a narrative is to tell a story that has a definite resolution or conclusion. The purpose of an anecdote is to tell a story that has an open-ended resolution, or no resolution at all. The purpose of an exemplum is to tell a story with a moral or message to it. The purpose of a recount is to tell a story that simply re-tells past events. There is no building up to a climax in a recount, but merely a logical or a sequential listing of events from the beginning to the end. However, an opinion is quite different from these other four. The purpose of an opinion is to present a point of view or an argument. As such, it does not tell a story, but rather gives reasons to support a stance on a topic (Eggs & Slade,

1997) (see Appendix 1). Examples of these five genres, produced by the two children, will be described and analyzed in this paper.

It is very common and very natural for many parents and bilingual children to engage in opinions and story-telling activities. Yet, each of these genres has a different social purpose. Even the four story-telling genres have slightly different social purposes. Teaching children to explicitly recognize these differences would be important for general understanding. Furthermore, even at a very basic level, it could help them discover that language is organized in different ways to achieve different social purposes. It could assist them to discover that language use is not just a matter of stringing words together. It could assist them to discover that, when we speak, we speak in different ways to achieve different purposes, and that these purposes are reflected in the ways that the texts are organized. This would appear to be significant for the language development of the bilingual children.

Theory of learning

Genre theory is a theory of language. It is not a theory of learning. However, in recent years, a socio-cultural learning cycle has been developed for schools, that underpins a genre-based description of language (DSP Literacy Project, 1989). The cycle has three main phases; modeling, joint negotiation and independent construction (DSP Literacy Project, 1989). In this paper, this learning cycle has been adapted for use with the two bilingual children.

According to Vygotsky (1978), learners learn best when the language is modeled for them and made explicit. This

is known as the modeling phase of learning. In this phase, the genre is introduced. This means that the purpose and the generic structure (or patterning) of the genre is made explicit to the children. Examples of how this is done are found in the sections “Dinner Time Talk” and “Bed Time Talk” in this paper.

Also, Vygotsky (1978) argues that learners learn best when there is joint participation with a “skilled expert.” This is known as the joint negotiation phase. Learners cannot be given immediate and full responsibility for the achievement of tasks. They must share the responsibility of constructing their own speech with a “skilled expert,” which in this paper, refers to the parent(s). The children must be given opportunities to practice and rehearse with the aide of the parent(s). Also, this practice must be recycled regularly. Thus, making use of the daily dinner time talk and the daily bed time talk is important in achieving this goal.

However, as the learners’ competencies improve, the parent(s) decrease the amount of support provided. This support is referred to as scaffolding. The children are then expected to take increasing responsibility for their own performance. The joint practicing and joint rehearsing is gradually taken away, and the learners are expected to independently construct their own spoken genres. This final step is known as the independent learning phase

The case study

This paper is part of a broader longitudinal study of the English language development of two Japanese-English bilingual children. In this paper, the case study consists of

describing and analyzing various spoken English genres produced by the children, and examining the implications of this approach in their overall English language development.

The explicit, genre-based approach described in this paper is not meant to be the only way of developing bilingual awareness in the children. It is meant to be complementary to the overall English language development of the children. Most of the children’s spoken English occurs with their parents, and in unrehearsed, spontaneous family contexts. The genre-based approach usually happens during dinner time talk and bed time talk. It does not usually happen at other times. However, the point of this paper is to examine the role that genre can play in assisting the overall development of bilingual awareness in children. This is particularly so in longer turns of talking, such as expressing opinions and story-telling (Eggins & Slade, 1997). In these activities, generic patterning is more obvious and has a more direct role to play in the construction of meaning.

In this project, every effort was made for the genre-based instruction to be presented naturally to the children by both the researcher and the parents. The genre-related items grew from out of the diverse dialogs of the family, particularly at dinner time and bed time. It is a very natural, real-life task in many cultures to recount daily events, to give opinions about school and friends, and to understand and tell stories at bed time. The role of genre in this paper was simply to make it clearer to the children, how these everyday activities are done. That is, how to organize your language to give a “good” recount (or a “report” as it is known in the family setting); or how to organize your language to give an effective opinion about something that happened at

kindergarten or at home. Technical terms such as “genre” and “purpose” are unnecessary for children and were not used. For example, the parents gave recounts of their own day, using tone and intonation to stress genre markers such as “then,” “next,” and “finally.” This would act as a kind of model for the children, but in a very natural way. Then, the children would follow, taking turns to give their own recounts of their day, while eating dinner. The parents would comment, as appropriate, and would only interrupt very occasionally. For example, to recast for a more appropriate marker, or to re-formulate from the present to the past tense. In this way, the explicit genre focus was perceived as very natural by the children. It was also very empowering, as it gave the children a sense of achievement.

The case study was conducted over a year, though it is part of an ongoing project. Not all conversations were recorded. Conversations were recorded randomly from dinner time talk and from bed time talk, usually once or twice a month. The conversations described and analyzed in this paper were chosen at random and were considered to be typical of the children’s speech at that time. Observation times for purposes of this research usually occurred four times a week.

The two children are sisters; Keiko, aged 5, and Rie, aged 3. Both girls were born and raised in Tokyo. Their mother-tongue is considered to be Japanese in terms of the children’s identity, language exposure and language proficiency. Their mother is Japanese. While she speaks English, she usually speaks to the children in Japanese. Their father is a native English speaker and speaks to them only in English. When the father is present, such as weekends or dinner time, the family speaks English only. When the father is not

present, which is the majority of time, the girls and their mother speak Japanese only. The other extended members of the family, such as grandparents and aunties, only speak Japanese. Family friends and school friends of the children only speak Japanese.

Dinner time talk

Dinner time talk and bed time talk is considered to be important in using genre to develop the children’s English. Most nights, usually with the father present, the family members take a turn at dinner time in giving a recount of their respective days. First, the father or mother would demonstrate the social purpose of the genre. For example, the father would announce that he wanted everybody to take a turn to give a report of their day. Initially, he would suggest some key words to use, such as “first, next, after that, then, and finally.” He would also cue for the past tense, by suggesting it was better to say “ran” rather than “run,” “played rather than “play” because what we did today has already finished. After the first few days, however, it became unnecessary to cue the key words. The children seem to recognize quite quickly what were suitable key words, and what were not. Then, the parents would give their recounts, in order to provide a model of the patterning of a recount genre. That is, a brief introduction is given, followed by a sequence of the day’s events, from the beginning of the day to the end. These events are usually cued by explicit discourse markers. For example: “first ..., then ..., after that ..., next ..., and finally, ...” (see Appendix 2). The parents would also stress past time reference in their models, because it is a grammar feature of this particular genre.

Explicit modeling of the generic structure (or the patterning) of the different genres is considered to be important in a socio-cultural approach to learning (Lantolf, 2000).

When the modeling by the parents was completed, the children would then take a turn in recounting the main events of their own day. The children usually only took one turn each. Any more was considered too unnatural and perhaps, a little threatening for the children. While the words and ideas were their own, the children quickly followed their parents lead and produced a similar generic patterning to that of their parents (see Appendix 3 & 4). That is, they tended to use similar markers as to those above. It did not seem to be a difficult task, even for the younger child.

Occasionally, the parents would assist the child by recasting into a more appropriate marker or by re-formulating a more appropriate point of grammar or vocabulary item. However, interruptions were usually kept to a minimum, and focused on the level of meaning rather than syntactical grammar.

When the parents deemed it necessary to interrupt to assist (rather than to make a comment), the child was considered to be in the joint negotiation phase of learning. In this phase, the child was considered to be in need of some kind of help (or scaffolding) from the parents, in order to effectively complete the task. When the parents deemed it not necessary to interrupt to help, then the child was considered to be functioning the independent learning phase. That is, she could successfully complete the task on her own.

In this study, all of the children's data that appears in Appendices 3 ~ 7, is considered to be representative of the independent construction phase of learning. However, in every genre and in all phases of the learning cycle, the

children made syntactical grammar errors. These were mostly viewed as developmental errors and were considered to be minor problems, as long as they did not significantly interfere with the overall meaning being conveyed. The focus was on the children's ability to make meaning. As long as the children could independently use vocabulary and a generic structure that was appropriate to the speaking purpose, then it was considered by the parents that they had independently and successfully completed the task (see Appendices 3 & 4). This view was the same for all the other genres in this study.

The connection between the joint negotiation phase and the independent construction phase did not occur in a straight line. On some topics and in some genres, the children needed support with language items. On others, they did not. Clearly, the topic of conversation was significant. Some topics were easier for the children to talk about than others. There seemed to be a constant fluctuation back and forth from joint negotiation to independent construction, depending on the topic.

In addition to recounts, the children were also exposed to opinion genres at dinner time talk. Following the same cycle as described above, one or both of the parents would explicitly state the purpose of the genre. For example, the mother would start by saying that she wanted to give her opinion or give her "idea" about a topic that was mentioned in one of the recounts. She would then give her opinion. When the parents had finished, they would then ask an opinion-type question to each of the children. The topic was usually connected with something that was mentioned in the recounts. Initially, the opinion pattern was made explicit to

the children. For example, stating a reaction to an opinion that had been requested (“Mm, I think it’s terrible!”) Then, typically, reasons were given to support the reaction (“... because ...” and “...and you know...”). Finally, a conclusion was given by re-stating the initial reaction (“So, ...”). The children were then asked to give their own opinions about something they mentioned in their recounts. For example: “Do you like going to the swimming pool (see Appendix 5)?” The words and ideas were their own. However, through the use of key words, such as “because” and “so,” the generic structure of an opinion was made explicit by the parents. In this way, the children were guided into using a similar pattern. When assistance was required, it was considered to be the joint negotiation phase. When it was not, it was considered to be the independent construction phase of learning.

During dinner time talk, the children were being made aware of two different genres of spoken English. The children were being shown that the purpose and the generic structure of these two genres are different. First, the purpose was made explicit and then the generic structure was modeled by their parents. After this, the children constructed their own genres, sometimes with parent support (joint construction) and sometimes without it (independent construction). The genres were the same for each of the family members, even though the topics varied according to the speaker’s interests. In this way, the children are guided into understanding the social purpose of the genre, as well as what they need to do in order to construct it.

Bed time talk

Bed time talk provides opportunities to expose children to different kinds of story telling genres. Stories were usually selected by the children on the basis of interest. A wide range of stories has been collected, that reflect narrative genres, anecdote genres and exemplum genres. These kinds of stories are typical of many popular, children’s stories. It was not necessary to use technical words such as orientation, coda and exemplum to describe the genre of the stories to the children. To the children, a story is a story. They start off with a kind of introduction, then build up the story with events that lead up to a climax or a high point, and then have some kind of ending.

One of the parents would start by explaining the purpose of the story. For example, depending on the type of story, the father would say that tonight’s story has a surprising ending; or it has an ending but it’s not so clear, so we have to listen and guess what happens; or it has an important message for us at the end of the story. In this way, the social purpose of the story is made explicit.

Bed time talk can consist of either the parent or the children telling a story. Who does this depends on the phase of the learning cycle. In the modeling phase, the parent usually read a story and the children listened. Like any story, the parent would emphasize the main points, through the use of such things as key words, pictures and tone. However, the parent would also include other elements that are important to the story’s generic structure. For example, stories tend to start with an introduction, then build up through a sequence of events that lead to a climax, and finally end with a conclusion and/or a final comment on the story as a

whole. The parent would then ask questions about the story, focusing on its generic structure. For example, what were the main things that happened? What was the most exciting part of the story? What was the conclusion? What was the message of the story? As the children's knowledge of the story increased, the parent moved to the joint negotiation phase. One or both children would jointly construct the story with the parent. For example, the parent nominated one or both of the children to take over telling selected parts of the story, or to complete the remainder of the story. As with dinner time talk, if the child needed some support or assistance to do this, then the child was considered to be functioning in the joint negotiation phase of the learning cycle. Finally, when the parent felt the children were ready, they moved to the independent construction phase. In this phase, one or both of the children retold the same story in their own words, without any assistance from the parent. This would include the moral or message of the story, if it were applicable. While the children made syntactical grammar errors, the focus was on making meaning. That is, re-telling different kinds of stories in a way that was appropriate to their purpose and their generic structure. Using this as criteria, the children appear to have been successful (see Appendices 6 & 7).

Occasionally, the children made up an entirely original story by themselves. While the content of the story might have changed, the new story should have been the same genre as the original. When this happened, the parent would typically ask: "So, do you think there is a message in your story? Is it the same as mummy's story?" This allows the children to be creative. However, it also reinforces the

generic structure of the model story and thus, reinforces the purpose for speaking.

In this way, the children are learning that not all stories are the same. Depending on the purpose, some stories have "hidden" messages and some do not; some stories tell you the ending, but others want you to guess it. In short, they are being made aware that stories have different purposes. By making the purpose and the generic staging of the stories explicit, the children are being taught how to recognize different kinds of stories. They are also being taught how to construct different kinds of stories themselves. This would appear to be important for the children's language development.

Implications for bilingualism

Using genre as a tool for assisting language development has some important implications for bilingualism.

The first implication is the issue of speaking for a purpose. When we speak, we speak in different ways to achieve different purposes. The term genre represents the various social purposes of language (Eggs & Slade, 1997). In this genre-based framework, the children are being assisted to discover that language is used in different ways in order to achieve different purposes. This would appear to be an important issue in bilingualism and second language development in general. This paper has emphasized the importance of making the purpose and the text structure explicit. The text structure acts as a tool for speaking in different ways, in order to achieve these different social purposes of speaking. SFL stresses that language does

have a purpose, and that this purpose is reflected by its generic structure (Martin, 1989; Eggins & Slade, 1997). It is not just an erratic mass of words. Language has a certain organization and often demonstrates a certain patterning, particularly in longer turns of talking. This is just as significant in Japanese as it is in English, even though the organization may be very different in the two languages.

From a generic structure analysis of the children's data, the children are demonstrating an ability to speak in different ways in order to achieve different purposes of speaking. The children's data in Appendices 3~7, represents the independent learning phase. In each case, the children have organized their language to speak in a way that is appropriate to the speaking purpose. The children have spontaneously constructed the genres by themselves, without prompting or rehearsing from the parents. As such, they have been successful.

Even at a very basic level, the children have organized the generic structure of their language in different ways that are appropriate to their different purposes of speaking. For example, as previously stated, the purpose of a recount is different from that of an opinion. Therefore, the generic structure of the recount is likely to be different from that of the opinion. In the recount data (see Appendices 3 & 4), both children have used appropriate discourse markers to signal the chronological sequence of events. This is typical of a recount genre, as the purpose is to recount a past event. For example, markers such as "after that ...," "and then ...," and "finally ..." explicitly signal the chronological order of the events they are recounting (see Appendices 3 & 4). In the opinions (see Appendix 5), on the other hand, the

children have recognized that a different generic structure is required, in order to achieve this particular purpose of speaking. Again, the children have used a generic structure that is appropriate to this genre and to this purpose. Hence, the sequential markers of a recount are not appropriate. These have been replaced by causal conjunctions ("because ..." and "because ..."), so that the children can give reasons to support their opinions (see Appendix 5). This kind of patterning is considered to be typical of an opinion genre (Eggins & Slade, 1997). This suggests that the children recognize that they need to organize their language in different ways in order to achieve these different purposes of speaking. They appear to have understood that a different kind of generic structure is required for the purpose of giving a recount, from that of expressing an opinion, and from that of telling stories (see Appendices 6 & 7). From the data, it can then be argued that the children are developing an awareness of speaking for a purpose, through the different ways they have organized their language, which are appropriate to the different purposes of speaking. Helping children discover that there are different ways of speaking, in order to achieve different social purposes, would appear to be an important consideration for child bilingualism, as well as the field of second language development.

The children's genre-based use of language was not confined solely to dinner time talk or bed time talk. Through observation, the researcher noted on many occasions that the children were able to transfer these different ways of speaking quite spontaneously to other situations. For example, while playing soccer in the park, Rie was asked to if she liked her new teacher. She was able to give

her opinion, supported by reasons, and draw a logical conclusion, in a way which was very appropriate to the purpose of speaking. Furthermore, while playing basketball in the garage, Keiko was asked to tell the researcher about the new story that her mother had read to her the night before. She was able to start with an orientation, describe the sequence of events, which built up to a climax, then describe how it ended. She then told the researcher that the story had no message. This style of speaking was appropriate to the purpose of a narrative genre. Conversations such as these were not taped. Up to this point, recordings of conversations have focused mainly on dinner time talk and bed time talk. However, these and other similar examples suggest that the children are beginning to transfer the notion of genre and speaking for a purpose to situations beyond dinner time talk and bed time talk. This would appear to be significant for the overall language development of the two children.

The second implication is moving beyond the level of the sentence to produce holistic discourse. This is just as important in Japanese as it is in English. From an analysis of the children's data, it appears they have been able to independently produce their own genres. This means they have been able to produce an holistic piece of discourse, even allowing for the obvious grammar errors. These texts have been organized in an appropriate way, from the beginning, through to the middle, and finally through to the end. They are not just producing strings of sentences, or lots of questions and answers. By providing the children with holistic models, and making the generic structure of these models explicit, the children appear to be capable of producing holistic pieces of discourse. From the data, they

have been able to move beyond the level of a sentence and have been able to independently construct their own texts. This would appear to be significant, particularly at such an early stage of language development.

In the children's texts, there are many obvious examples of grammar errors. For example, in Rie's texts, she usually uses the present tense instead of the past tense (see Appendix 4). The same applies to Keiko. While she sometimes uses the past tense, Keiko tends to mix the two tenses together (see Appendix 3). However, it is important to note that Keiko, the older of the two sisters, is beginning to use past time reference more frequently. As such, these grammatical errors are considered to be developmental errors. As the children get older, their language in both Japanese and English will develop. However, their knowledge of the world will also develop, as well as their place in it. It is expected that, as this happens, their ability to use past-time reference will also develop. At this stage, the children's grammar errors are not considered to be of any major concern. The important issue is that the children are using language to make meaning at the level of a text. Grammar is used as a tool for this purpose. They are not focusing on constructing syntactically correct sentences. Even allowing for their grammar mistakes, the children are able to make meaning by constructing holistic texts that are suitable for the different speaking purposes.

The third and fourth implications are the roles of explicit learning and scaffolding in the language learning process. These are related to Vygotskian (1978) and socio-cultural approaches to learning described earlier in this paper. These issues are relevant to both Japanese and English language

learning. Martin (1989) states that the construction of genres is a socio-cultural process. Therefore, we cannot assume that second language learners will automatically learn how to construct these socio-culturally specific genres by themselves. Vygotsky (1978) and Gibbons (2002) argue that these need to be made explicit to learners. The theory of learning adopted in this paper, highlights the importance of making the language models explicit to learners. The purpose and the generic structure of each genre is made explicit to the children in the modeling phase. The children and their parents then practice and jointly construct the genres in the joint negotiation phase. Sometimes, the scaffolding or assistance from the parent(s) is very high; sometimes, it is not. The nature of the assistance varies from task to task, and from situation to situation. Also, the genres are recycled many times over, which also provides a certain amount of support or scaffolding for the children. For example, the same story may be read, re-read and discussed many times. It is quite usual for Keiko and Rie to want to hear the same story read again and again. Also, giving recounts and opinions are recycled nearly every day, as these are considered to be normal, real-life activities. The purpose of speaking is often hidden behind the normal, everyday nature of the task. However, the ultimate goal is for the children to speak in different ways by themselves. Thus, the parent support ultimately needs to be removed. In the independent construction phase, the scaffolding is completely removed and the children produce the genre without any assistance. Sometimes, this is very successful, other times not so. However, before independent construction can occur, the children need to be provided with varying degrees of support, before the scaffolding can

be removed. These are important issues for learning in both Japanese and English.

Conclusion

In conclusion, using genre to facilitate the English language development of the two bilingual children in this paper appears to be playing both a significant and a contentious role. The children's data indicates that, by making the generic structure explicit, they are developing an awareness of speaking in different ways in order to achieve different social purposes. Developing this kind of diversity in speaking would appear to be useful for the overall language development of the children. On the other hand, some may view this kind of a genre-based approach as somewhat contrived and unnatural. However, efforts have been made in this paper to point out that this is not the case. Through language, the children are discovering about life; about themselves, their family, their society, the world and their place in the world. They need language to do this. The role of genre, then, is to make the language they need more accessible. In all cases, the genres that have been analyzed in this paper, have grown out of natural reasons to speak, within the family context. It was not excessively artificial or contrived. The focus has been placed on speaking in a context. The situation and the speaking purpose came first, not the genre "formula." There is nothing unnatural or artificial about recounting daily events or sharing opinions with the family members at dinner time. Likewise, there is nothing unnatural or artificial about telling different kinds of stories at bed time. Through genre theory, we are simply making explicit what these genres are, and how the speaking

is done. That is, what the children and the parents need to know about these ways of speaking, and how they can use this knowledge to speak more effectively. This would appear to be of benefit to both the children and the parents.

For many children, language learning is a seemingly endless mass of sounds and words. By making these common genres explicit, it is hoped that children and parents will understand that language has a system that can be described. By making the system more explicit, it is hoped that they will develop a better understanding of how language works. It is also hoped that this will, to some extent, de-mystify the language learning process for the children and the parents, and in turn, make them more effective language users.

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Appendix 1. Five common genres of casual conversation

Genre	Generic Structure	Social Purpose
Narrative	(Abstract)^(Orientation)^ Complication^Evaluation ^Resolution^(Coda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To tell a story with a crisis and a <i>definite resolution</i> To tell a story with an evaluation by the narrator
Anecdote	(Abstract)^(Orientation)^Remarkable Event^Reaction^(Coda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To tell a story with a crisis and an <i>open-ended resolution or no resolution</i> To tell a story with focus on the reaction to the crisis
Exemplum	(Abstract)^(Orientation)^Incident ^Interpretation^(Coda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To tell a story with a crisis and a <i>moral</i> to the story
Recount	(Abstract)^(Orientation)^Record of Events^(Coda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To tell a story with no crisis. A <i>retelling of events</i>
Opinion	Opinion^Reaction^(Evidence) ^(Resolution)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To present a <i>point of view</i> or an argument

(adapted from Eggins & Slade, 1997)

Key:

() = optional element

^ = followed by

Abstract = main point

Orientation = background information

Coda = final comment

Resolution = ending, conclusion

Crisis = the climax of the events

Complication = series of events

Appendix 2. Mother's model text of a daily recountOrientation:

First, No lunch box.

Had breakfast with children and grandparents.

Events:

After that me and Keiko came downstairs to study English.

Keiko read very well and did some sound practice (phonetics).

After that Daddy took Keiko to kindy. (kindergarten)

Then I went upstairs and chatted with Rie.

Then I went jogging.

And I had a shower.

And I studied with Rie, English. She was very good.

After that, me and Rie picked Keiko up at kindy and stay there for a while.

And come back, and Keiko studied Japanese.

And then we all went to the swimming pool.

And after we came back home and Keiko practice the piano again. Mummy had to prepare dinner.

And finally, we had dinner together.

**Appendix 3. Keiko's recount of her day:
Independent construction phase**Orientation:

Wake up in the morning and have a breakfast.

And I washed my face and brushed my teeth.

And I changed and said good morning to dad.

Events:

And umm I went downstairs.

And today, I am trying to spell “will” vs “well”.

And I went to kindy. (kindergarten)

After that I make something...glasses.

And then, it was time to do dance.

And, it was time to do sports. I was “oengakari”. (cheer leader) on the “taiko” drum.

And, it's time to go home.

And mummy picked me up and we stayed (at the kindy) for a while.

And I played with my friends.

And I have lunch.

And daddy and mummy and Rie and me went to the swimming pool. *After* the swimming pool, we have ice cream.

And we went back home and I practiced the piano.

And daddy picked me up (took me downstairs) and we went downstairs.

And finally, daddy picked me up and we went downstairs.

Appendix 4. Rie's recount of her day: Independent Construction Phase

Orientation:

I wake up in the morning and I have breakfast with Keiko
And after breakfast, I changed and washed my face.

Events:

And after that, I studied English with mummy. The letter “S”.

And then, I studied Japanese with Yukie (aunty).

And then, I pick up Keiko with mummy. I be careful with my hair.

And I went with Keiko after kindy. (kindergarten)

And then, It's time to go home.

First of all, Keiko and Mummy and me go to the swimming pool and last, Daddy go to the other way (daddy went the wrong way!). *And then*, at the swimming pool, daddy watched me. *And then*, we have ice cream. *And then* it's time to go home.

And then, we come back in “oji-chan's house” (grandfather's house)

And daddy went downstairs and do some work.

And I go upstairs; it was night. *And then* I “drawed” some “omen” (mask); a circus mask and Keiko draw some television.

And then, I go downstairs and I watched “Sleeping Beauty”.

Finally, we eat food.

Appendix 5. Opinions of Keiko and Rie: Independent Construction Phase

Question 1: Keiko, so do you like going to the swimming pool?

Answer 1:

Opinion: Nods (yes).

Reason: *Because* it's fun.

Support: Sometimes kids can't breathe and water is on your face.

(you hold your breath and water covers your face).

Question 2: Rie, do you like your swimming teacher?

Answer 2:

Opinion : Yeah!

Reason: *Because* she's funny.

Support 1: *And because* she says “Alright!” and I laughed at her.

Support 2: *And* the other teacher was not funny.

Question 3: Keiko, do you like your “yochien?” (kindergarten?)

Answer 3:

Opinion: Yeah.

Reason 1: *Because* it has a swimming pool.

Support: *Because* I love water.

Reason2: Sometime my teacher is rough (angry) but she's still a good teacher.

Reason 3: And because it has more space to play.

Support: And there are lots of tree to anybody to climb and lots of fruit.

A lots of green too.

Question 4: Rie, do you like picking up Keiko (with mummy) at “yochien?”

Answer 4:

Opinion: Oh yeah.

Reason 1: Because I love to play.

Reason 2: And I like to pick up some leave.

Support: And my mummy loves these leaves.

Appendix 6. Rie’s Anecdote: Independent Construction Phase: Re-telling “Kessie, the Magpie” —a Bed-time story

Orientation:

This is Jonathan; this is grandma; and this is grandpa. They live in the small house. At the end of the street is the magpie... in the big gum tree.

Events:

1. And...swish, and grandpa fell over on the bike because Kessie the magpie attack him.
2. And when grandma went to the library, Kessie the magpie picked (pecked) her head.
3. And then, Jonathan, the magpie tried to peck his cheek. And Jonathan went away quickly.

Reaction:

And how was grandpa going to the work?

And how was grandma going to the library?

And how was Jonathan going to school? He’ll be late for school! It’s going to be dark!

Events:

4. And, they have a good idea. And then, grandpa going to the yard; and grandma go inside; with Jonathan have a big box of drums and balloons.
5. And then: “tick, bom-bom, bom-bom” (gesture: they made 3 big drums).

Remarkable Events:

And Kessie the magpie didn’t move...she stayed in the gum tree (because of the loud noise).

Conclusion:

And grandpa going to work (he could to work); and grandma can go to the library; with Jonathan can go to school.

Coda:

And then Kessie the magpie said: “Waddle, giggle gargle”.

And, she have 3 little babies.

And have....(inaudible).

She said: “Don’t come near my eggs”.

Appendix 7. Keiko’s Narrative: Independent Construction Phase: Re-telling “Hairy Maclary’s Bone”—a Bed-time Story

Orientation:

First the man (Mr. Stone) give Hairy Maclary (dog) a very big, tasty bone.

And all the dog looking at Hairy Maclary’s bone. Like today I looked at mummy’s scones (delicious!!).

And then, the dogs all chasing after Hairy Maclary’s bone.

Events:

1. And first, Hercules Morse. But he was big so he can’t get in the big hole (in the fence).

2. And now, they go to the road. And the spotty dog, Bottomley Potts, he got stuck on the rope.

3A. And, it was the skinny dog.

Evaluation:

And he have a big, big trouble.

Events: (cont.)

3B. And the rocks was all tumbling (down on him).

4. And last, the low tum-tum dog (short dog) can’t get in (over) the wall.

Resolution:

In the end, he got safe...Hairy Maclary got the bone.

Coda:

He was a lucky dog! He is luckier than Polly (our dog in Australia)!