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# A Genre-Based Approach in Teaching Arabic Writing for Higher Education Learners

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### ABSTRACT

This article explored the role of genre-based grammar instruction in addressing these challenges and enhancing university students' ability to write effectively in Arabic. This research employed True Experimental Research with Post-test Only Group Design. The results of the study show that GBA has considerable impact on improving student writing outcomes. The statistical analysis showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in writing test scores, with a significant mean difference of 1.25 in favor of the experimental group. Levene's test indicated no significant difference in variances between groups. The results further demonstrate that the use of the Genre Based Approach has a significant impact on improving students' writing performance.

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### Keyword

Genre; Grammar; Higher Education; Writing

### مستخلص البحث

الكتابة الأكاديمية أهمية خاصة لطلاب التعليم العالي، فهي تزودهم بمهارات ضرورية للنجاح الأكاديمي والمهني. ورغم ذلك، يواجه تدريس الكتابة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي تحديات عدة، منها استعداد الطلاب، إتقان اللغة، والوعي بالأنواع الأدبية. تستعرض هذه المقالة دور تدريس قواعد اللغة المرتكز على النوع الأدبي في معالجة هذه التحديات وتعزيز قدرة الطلاب على الكتابة الفعالة باللغة العربية في التعليم العالي. اعتمد البحث التصميم التجريبي الحقيقي (تصميم المجموعة بعد الاختبار فقط). وتظهر النتائج أن استخدام GBA له أثر كبير في تحسين نتائج كتابة الطلاب

نوع أدبي؛ القواعد؛ الكتابة؛ التعليم العالي

كلمات أساسية

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## INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions emphasize the development of students' writing skills, since writing skills correlate with academic success and professional readiness. Writing is a means of communicating research findings and articulating complex ideas (Adeleke, 2023; Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024). Clear communication is essential in academic discourse and knowledge dissemination within various fields (AlMarwani, 2020). Mork and Oldham (2018) state that academic writing helps students use evidence to support their ideas and communicate them effectively. Academic writing allows students to demonstrate their understanding of a subject to be disseminated by constructing logical arguments based on valid information (Rose & McClafferty, 2001). Writing skill applies to the professional domain, where graduates use these skills to practice their expertise, engage in scholarly conversations, and contribute to knowledge advancement (Anis et al., 2022; Camarinha-Matos et al., 2020; Jaja, 2024; Nägele & Stalder, 2017; Sparks et al., 2014).

Many college students find academic writing challenging. Results of previous studies show that such experience occurs across various educational settings. A study on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students shows that this issue stems from a lack of familiarity with the expected structure and style of academic texts (Asnas & Hidayanti, 2024; Maharani et al., 2023). Students frequently struggle with essential components in academic writing, such as thesis statements, coherence, and proper referencing techniques (Muthia Sandra Riphasa, 2024; Nenotek et al., 2022). Cognitive factors also affect this issue, since cognitive skills, such as critical thinking and the ability to synthesize information from diverse sources are also required in academic writing (Singh, 2019). Many students were overwhelmed by the mental demands of organizing their thoughts coherently based on strict formatting guidelines (Jia, 2024; Rohmah & Muslim, 2021). Moreover, non-native speakers have to develop adequate proficiency in the target language, as the grammar and vocabulary differ from their native language in arranging and developing their ideas (Ouanhlee, 2023; Selvi et al., 2024).

The instructional environment also significantly influences students' writing abilities. A lack of targeted support and feedback can hinder students' progress in mastering academic writing skills. Studies have shown that a discipline-specific writing environment engages students in the intensive writing process (Mitchell et al., 2017). Writing procedurally scaffolded and strategy-supported instruction has been shown to reduce students' anxiety in foreign language writing (Tsiriatakis et al., 2017). Similarly, game-based writing environments effectively enhance students' writing participation, performance, interest, and perceptions of educational self-management games (Liao et al., 2018). However, these

studies also indicate that without explicit instruction in writing conventions and sustained engagement through iterative feedback, learners are unlikely to develop the competencies required for academic success.

The genre-based grammar instruction has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach to address this gap. The approach recognizes that writing is shaped by specific genres that carry different communicative purposes, audience expectations, and linguistic conventions. By integrating grammar instruction within the context of genres, higher education students are exposed to the specific grammatical features, structures, and patterns of academic writing.

Recent studies have shown that implementing a genre-based approach (GBA) strengthens students' writing skills and attitudes towards writing (Nagao, 2022; Zhai & Razali, 2023). Herman et al (2020) find GBA important in overcoming students' difficulties in writing (Herman et al., 2020). Chang Liu and Meihua Chen (2022) state that GBA is a part of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) genre theory, which emphasizes the importance of teaching students how to use language in different contexts (Liu & Chen, 2024). Tanaporn Ueasiriphan and Supong Tangkiengsirisin (2019) conducted a study that involved Thai engineers who learned writing using GBA. In the study, the engineers' attitudes were positive about the teaching method (Ueasiriphan & Tangkiengsirisin, 2019). Richardson (2024) has focused on lecturers' perceptions of the implementation of GBA in teaching writing at schools and concluded that the majority of lecturers recognized the positive impacts of GBA in their writing skill development (Richardson et al., 2024). Other researchers recommend GBA as a new concept for efficient teaching and learning of English, especially in writing (Zhai & Razali, 2023) (Strietholt et al., 2024) (Zohbie & Bhowmik, 2024).

Some gaps have been identified in the existing literature on the genre-based approach (GBA) in teaching writing. Studies on the effectiveness of the genre-based approach (GBA) for teaching writing to non-native Arabic speakers and in different writing contexts, like creative or technical writing, are still limited. Most of the current literature focuses on English learners or academic writing. The implementation of GBA in various educational settings, such as universities, is still under-researched. Furthermore, the integration of GBA and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and modern technology has not been thoroughly examined.

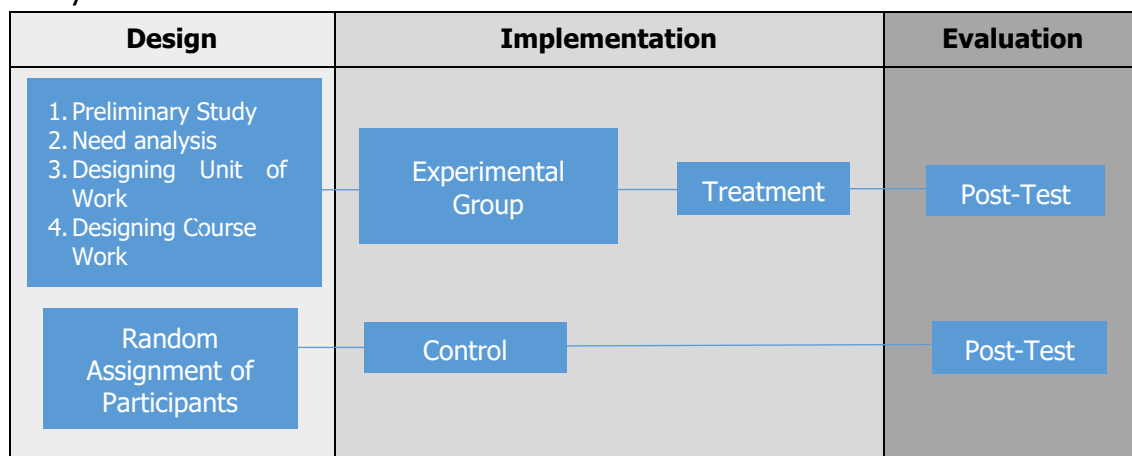
This article investigates how genre-based grammar instruction enhances university students' ability to write effectively in Arabic. This study aims to contribute to the pedagogical discourse on effective strategies for improving Arabic writing skills among higher education students. The article also highlights the potential of genre-based grammar instruction for developing students' genre awareness, linguistic competence, and overall proficiency in academic writing. Additional issues related to integrating AI-Driven Writing Assistance Tools with a

Genre-Based Approach in teaching writing are also addressed in a subsequent chapter.

**METHOD**

This True Experimental Research was performed using the Post-test Only Group Design to identify the causal relationship between the independent variable (the grammar-based approach) and the dependent variable (Arabic writing skills). This design measured whether the observed differences in the dependent variable are attributed to the changes in the independent variable.

This study was performed through three main steps: design, implementation, and evaluation. In the design phase, a preliminary study and needs analysis were conducted to understand the students’ characteristics, program goals, and writing subject to be used as the basis for the development of units of work and teaching materials. These materials were then implemented with the experimental group. The evaluation phase assessed the effectiveness of the genre-based approach. Figure 2 outlines the steps and procedures of this study



**Figure 1.** Procedures of the Study

*Research Participants and Data Collection Techniques*

Participants of this study were second-year undergraduate students from the Arabic language program at Universitas Darussalam Gontor. Twenty students were randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group. The experimental group was taught using the structured grammar-based instruction, focusing on the application of grammar rules in writing. Meanwhile, the control group was taught using the standard curriculum. Over three sessions, the experimental group was engaged in genre-based writing activities, and the control group learned using traditional instruction. At the end of the intervention,

both groups underwent a validated Arabic writing assessment to test the coherence, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy of their works.

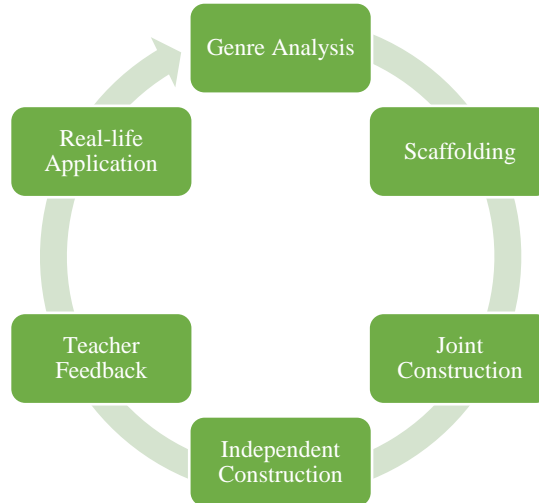
#### *Data Analysis Technique*

Quantitative analysis was administered to compare the Arabic writing scores of the experimental and control groups. An independent samples t-test using IBM SPSS 22 was performed to identify any statistically significant differences in mean scores. The results were analyzed and drawn into a conclusion on whether the grammar-based approach effectively improved students' Arabic writing skills.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### *Genre-Based Grammar Teaching Implementation*

The Genre-based Approach (GBA) learning cycle encompasses several distinct phases, each contributing to students' comprehensive understanding and proficient application of specific genres. This cycle is designed to guide students through the process of learning, analyzing, and producing texts within targeted genres. It typically involves several stages including Genre Analysis, Scaffolding, Joint Construction, Independent Construction, Teacher Feedback, Reflection, and Real-life Application phase. The figure.1. illustrated these sequences in detail.



**Figure.1. GBA Learning Cycle**

As it illustrated above, the GBA starts with genre analysis where students learn the distinctive features, structures, language patterns, and communicative intentions of a particular genre. This initial step establishes a foundational awareness of genre conventions. Subsequently, students enter the scaffolding phase. Here, educators provide structured support, deconstructing genre components and facilitating understanding through modeling, prompts, and

clarifications. This scaffolding cultivates a robust comprehension of the genre's intricacies. Progressing from scaffolding, learners engage in joint construction. Collaboratively, they craft texts in adherence to genre conventions, fostering peer interaction, critical thinking, and the application of acquired genre knowledge. Moving forward, the independent construction phase follows joint construction. During this stage, students autonomously produce texts within the genre framework. Applying their grasp of structure, language use, and conventions, they express personal ideas.

The subsequent teacher feedback phase involves educators providing constructive insights on content, organization, language usage, and genre adherence. This phase guides students toward refining their writing skills. Throughout the cycle, reflective moments are integrated. Students assess progress, acknowledge strengths, and pinpoint areas for growth. Reflection contributes to metacognition and continuous improvement. In final step, the GBA learning cycle encourages the real-world application of acquired genre skills. Learners confidently engage with diverse genres beyond the classroom, employing their understanding of conventions and language patterns. In its structured progression, the GBA learning cycle holistically nurtures students' growth as adept writers. From initial genre exploration to practical utilization, this framework equips learners with the competence to effectively engage with varied genres and communicate purposefully.

*The pros of GBA in teaching writing*

The data report the results of the experiment involving two groups, each with 10 participants, with no missing data. The experimental group achieved a higher mean score of 6.60 compared to the control group (5.35). The standard error of the mean was 0.27689 for the experimental group and 0.30777 for the control group, reflecting the precision of the mean estimates. The lower standard error in the experimental group suggests a more reliable estimation of its mean score.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistic Data Statistics

		Experiment	Control
N	Valid	10	10
	Missing	0	0
Mean		6,6000	5,3500
Std. Error of Mean		,27689	,30777
Median		6,7500	5,5000
Mode		6,00 <sup>a</sup>	6,00
Std. Deviation		,87560	,97325
Variance		,767	,947
Range		3,00	2,50
Minimum		5,00	4,00

Maximum	8,00	6,50
Sum	66,00	53,50

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Additionally, the "Experiment" group has a higher median score of 6.75 compared to the "Control" group's median of 5.50. However, the presence of multiple modes, as shown by the smallest value, suggests possible complexities within the data distributions within subgroups or variations that need further investigation. Overall, these findings provide valuable insights into group performance and highlight the need for deeper analysis to understand the factors behind these differences.

Before conducting the t-test, the data underwent a normality test to determine if each group's scores followed a normal distribution to be eligible for parametric tests. As shown in the table, both the "Experiment" and "Control" groups were assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The experimental group (sig = 0.176,  $p = 0.200$ ) and the control group (sig = 0.248,  $p = 0.082$ ) both showed no significant deviation.

**Table 2.** Data Normality Test

		Data Normality Test					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Writing Test Result	Experiment	,176	10	,200 <sup>*</sup>	,959	10	,769
	Control	,248	10	,082	,881	10	,135

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted for both groups to assess data normality. For the experimental group, the Shapiro-Wilk test yielded a statistic of 0.959 (df = 10,  $p = 0.769$ ), while the control group showed a statistic of 0.881 ( $p = 0.135$ ). These results provide no evidence to reject the assumption of normality. Consistently, both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicate no substantial deviation from normality in the writing test scores of either group.

### Homogeneity Test

The data summarize the results of a homogeneity of variance test, which assesses whether variances across the compared groups are approximately equal, a key assumption in many statistical analyses. The test was applied to writing test scores using multiple approaches, including means, medians, trimmed means, and adjusted degrees of freedom, to confirm the consistency of variance across conditions.

**Table 3.** Test of Homogeneity of Variance Data

		Test of Homogeneity of Variance			
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Writing Test Result	Based on Mean	,614	1	18	,444
	Based on Median	,540	1	18	,472
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,540	1	17,394	,472
	Based on trimmed mean	,613	1	18	,444

Levene’s test indicated no violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption across the evaluated metrics. The test based on the mean yielded a statistic of 0.614 (df = 1, 18, p = 0.444), while the median-based test produced a statistic of 0.540 (p = 0.472), including the version with adjusted degrees of freedom. The trimmed mean test showed a similar result (0.613, df = 1, 18, p = 0.444). In all cases, p values exceeded 0.05, supporting the assumption of equal variances between groups.

**T Test**

After confirming normality and homogeneity of variance, the data were analyzed using a t-test. Statistical information of both two groups were collected through observations done ten times to compare students’ writing test results.

**Table 4.** T-Test Result

Group Statistics					
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Writing Test Result	Experiment	10	6,60	,876	,277
	Control	10	5,35	,973	,308

**Table 5.** Independent Samples Test

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper

Writing Test Result	Equal variances assumed	,614	,444	3,019	18	,007	1,250	,414	,380	2,120
	Equal variances not assumed			3,019	17,802	,007	1,250	,414	,380	2,120

The experimental group achieved a higher mean writing score ( $M = 6.60$ ,  $SD = 0.876$ ,  $SE = 0.277$ ) than the control group ( $M = 5.35$ ,  $SD = 0.973$ ,  $SE = 0.308$ ). Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant ( $0.614$ ,  $p = 0.444$ ), indicating comparable variances between groups. Consistent results were obtained when equal variances were not assumed, supporting the robustness of this finding.

The t-test for Equality of Means shows a statistically significant difference between the "Experiment" and "Control" groups. Assuming equal variances, the independent samples t-test yielded a significant result,  $t(18) = 3.019$ ,  $p = 0.007$ . The mean difference was  $1.250$  ( $SE = 0.414$ ), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from  $0.380$  to  $2.120$ . The Levene's test does not provide significant evidence to suggest a difference in variances between the groups. Overall, these results confirm that the "Experiment" group performed significantly better on the writing test than the "Control" group, and this difference is robust even when considering the assumption of equal variances.

The quantitative data show that the genre-based intervention significantly improved students' writing skills. The "Experiment" group outperformed the "Control" group, with a statistically significant mean difference of  $1.250$  points ( $t = 3.019$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). The genre-based instruction enhanced students' writing by focusing on specific genres, genre analysis, and text construction. Similar findings were also found by Almacioğlu and Okan's work, where students showed increased metacognitive awareness and overall writing performance (Almacioğlu & Okan, 2018). Effective genre-based instruction enables students to understand and adapt to the conventions of different discourse communities. By recognizing that writing is context-dependent and each genre has distinct expectations, students gain analytical skills to tailor their writing to various academic contexts.

The use of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in teaching writing significantly enhances students' ability to recognize and adjust their writing styles. GBA's effectiveness is evident in addressing challenges in both areas by providing a structured framework that integrates these skills. GBA fosters more comprehensive language proficiency (Pangesti Wibowo & Lengkanawati, 2024),

by engaging the students to actively analyze the structures and language features of different genres through reading. GBA guides students to examine the genre conventions, patterns, and language choices of texts. Such skill is the foundation of writing skills that allows students to transform the knowledge from reading into writing.

The Genre-Based Approach (GBA) recognizes that writing is shaped by social and situational contexts. As students engage with and analyze a variety of genres, they become more aware of the dynamic relationship between texts and their surrounding circumstances (Yasuda, 2015). Through practical application and critical analysis, students learn that writing is an intentional response to specific communicative contexts. This awareness strengthens their writing and expressive skills, where students can adapt their writing to different audiences and purposes.

#### *Linguistics Barriers in Using GBA*

Although this study confirms the effectiveness of the Genre Based Approach in enhancing students' writing skills, additional variables should be examined. As noted by Ari Irawan, future research should account for these factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of writing development (Ari Irawan, 2019). In particular, students' language backgrounds should be considered when implementing the Genre-Based Approach, as this consideration allows lecturers to adjust instruction to learners' linguistic needs and supports inclusive and culturally responsive writing instruction.

Understanding students' language proficiency is essential for effective genre analysis in GBA. Assessing proficiency levels allows lecturers to tailor support, where less proficient students can receive extra help with genre-specific features, while advanced learners can take on more complex writing tasks. This differentiated instruction aligns with GBA principles of scaffolding and support. The theory also suggests that higher education students with stronger grammar skills tend to perform better than average students.

Implementing the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in teaching Arabic writing to university students is challenging due to the language's complex grammatical features. Arabic's intricate morphology, verb conjugation, and root-based structure create specific difficulties for both lecturers and learners within the GBA framework. One major challenge is the complexity of Arabic grammatical structures, especially verb forms and noun-adjective agreement. Since GBA requires detailed analysis of linguistic features within genres, navigating verb conjugation patterns and grammatical nuances can be demanding, even for native speakers.

Arabic's morphological complexity requires careful integration into GBA teaching. Lecturers need to explain the complexity clearly. Additionally, the Arabic script's dependence on diacritical marks for vowels adds further challenges (Setiyadi et al., 2022). In Arabic, diacritics can significantly change word meanings, making it challenging for students to interpret and use them accurately within genres. Thereby, a clear explanation of the materials is necessary to help students master these important details.

#### *Challenges on AI-Driven Writing Tools*

The use of AI-driven writing tools might cause students to become overly reliant on automated writing assistance even before they develop adequate critical writing and editing skills. This reliance can undermine authentic engagement with the writing process. AI tools may introduce new writing norms that differ from traditional genre conventions, challenging the relevance of GBA in teaching writing. Hence, continuous professional development and studies are necessary to keep up with the dynamics (Ferris, 2010).

A balanced integration of AI tools within the GBA framework can help address these challenges. AI tools should be used as a supplementary tool rather than substitutes for key writing stages. Rothermel (2006), Graham et al. (2015), and Warschauer and Grimes (2008) emphasize the limitations of AI tools and the essential role of human involvement in editing and revision. Furthermore, ongoing professional development for lecturers is essential. Workshops and training sessions can keep educators informed about the latest advancements in AI-driven writing tools. Collaborative research can further explore how AI tools intersect with genre-based instruction (Beth et al., 2006; Graham et al., 2015; Warschauer & Grimes, 2008).

Integrating GBA with AI-driven writing tools brings both challenges and opportunities. It is essential to balance the use of automated tools, stay informed on evolving language conventions influenced by AI, and provide targeted professional development. Lecturers can optimize the benefits of AI tools within the GBA framework while maintaining a strong focus on developing students' critical writing skills and genre awareness.

## CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in teaching Arabic writing for university students offers both potential and challenges. The distinctive grammatical features of Arabic, including verb conjugation, noun-adjective agreement, and reliance on diacritics, require careful consideration within the GBA framework. The AI-driven writing tools should be wisely employed

to avoid overreliance. Professional development for lecturers is essential to ensure that the core principles of the Genre-Based Approach, including genre awareness and critical writing skills, remain central despite technological advancements. GBA can be used to develop university students' writing skills that can be useful in the digital age. Future research should address several areas to further optimize the Genre-Based Approach in Arabic writing instruction at the university level. These include examining GBA techniques designed to address Arabic grammatical challenges, exploring the effective integration of AI writing tools without undermining critical writing skills and genre awareness, and comparing GBA with other instructional approaches in Arabic contexts. Additional research should investigate the effects of GBA across different Arabic writing genres, the role of lecturer professional development in successful implementation, and the long-term impact of GBA through longitudinal studies. Cross-cultural investigations are also needed to compare GBA implementation across diverse educational settings. Collectively, these research directions can refine GBA practices and enhance their effectiveness in developing strong Arabic writing skills that align with both the linguistic characteristics of Arabic and the demands of the digital era.

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