



A chronotopic approach to genre analysis: An exploratory study

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Abstract

This paper will examine Bakhtin's theory that a genre's unity is defined by its chronotope [Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel*. In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (pp. 84–258). Austin: University of Texas Press] and assume that, if this is true, the rhetorical unity within a specific genre could also be defined by its chronotope. Central to this theory will be the idea that the individual 'moves' [Swales, J. M. (1981). *Aspects of article introduction*. Birmingham, UK: University of Aston Language Studies Unit] within genres are defined by their use of time and space. In this way, the chronotope can be used as a device to analyze specific genres that are of interest to ESP composition, and can then be used as an instructional tool for the teaching of these particular genres to students within the ESP community. A corpus of L1 and L2 cover letters will be reviewed and linguistic markers of time and space will be compared to establish chronotopic move markers and chronotopic generic differences. The research summarized will consider what the pedagogical and semantic implications of these generic differences might be.

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1. Introduction

While much of Mikhail Bakhtin's work on the dialogic nature of discourse has been adopted by both the composition and the English as a Second Language (ESL) community, very little, if any, of his work on the chronotope has been used as an approach to analyze either the composing process of writers or the finished writing product. An exploratory examination of the chronotope will serve three main purposes:

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1. To show how Bakhtin's analysis of the chronotope can be used in association with the linguistic theory of genre analysis to provide an additional basis from which to analyze the properties of a 'move.'
2. To demonstrate how many of the conclusions about genre analysis that have been reached in the past can be better identified and subsequently improved upon through a chronotopic analysis.
3. To introduce new observations about genre analysis that could lead to improved teaching heuristics in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) instruction and illustrate the practical nature of the chronotope.

Bakhtin defined the chronotope as literally meaning *time and space* and used the chronotope specifically to categorize literary genres. Bakhtin felt that within literary genres there was a sense of natural connectedness between temporal and spatial relationships and that this association was artistically expressed in literature. That is to say, in the literary chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are amalgamated into one carefully constructed, concrete whole and this whole can be used to separate distinctive genres (Bakhtin, 1981). This paper will provide an initial examination into the idea that if a literary work's artistic unity can be defined by its chronotope, then the rhetorical unity within a specific genre might also be defined by its chronotope. Central to this approach is the idea that the individual 'moves' within genres are defined by their use of time and space. In this way, the chronotope can be used as an additional device to deconstruct specific genres that are of interest to ESP composition and the subsequent information gleaned can be used as an instructional tool for the teaching of these particular genres to students within the ESP community.

A 'move' is a text segment that can be identified by its particular linguistic clues. The move allows for a specific function within a text to be met and almost always signals the content of a particular discourse within a genre. A genre, therefore, is constructed based on moves, with each move leading to the overall coherent understanding of the text (Swales, 1981). The teaching of these moves allows students to be more aware of the various propositions expected within genres and helps them avoid mistakes that might come from not fulfilling the expectations of a genre.

As an example of how the chronotope can be used to examine the properties of a move, the work summarized in this paper will show how first language speakers of English (L1) construct the various moves found in cover letters with regard to their use of time and space in comparison to how second language learners of English (L2) construct the same moves. For example, when L1 writers in this corpus study used the move "Referring to Job Advertisement," they generally employed a chronotope that identified the time as occurring in the present (e.g., I am sending a follow up to your advertisement) and the semantic field¹ as informational (defined through lexical clues such as newspaper, position, advertisement and response), while in contrast, L2 writers typically used a chronotope that identified the time as occurring in the past (e.g., I spotted your job offer on a bulletin board) and showed significant differences in their use of the lexical items found within

¹ The term semantic field derives from the work of Trier (1931). The term refers to an area of meaning which can be separated from other areas of meaning based on semantic knowledge and related expressions. The term has been used in such fields as generative grammar (Katz & Fodor, 1963) and more recently in corpus linguistics (Louwse, 2004).

the L1 semantic field. As a result of these findings and similar findings in other moves, the research summarized in this paper not only hopes to show how the chronotope can help in better formulating a basis from which to understand the move, but also to show how L2 writers frequently mismanage the move chronotopes of the cover letter genre and what the pedagogical and semantic implications of these generic errors might be.

2. Genre analysis

The linguistic approach of genre analysis is defined and understood to be the study of linguistic behavior in both academic and professional settings (Bhatia, 1997). In addition to a description of the language used, genre analysis is also an explanation of why language is used differently within specific cultures and a demarcating of this specific language into smaller elements called moves. A move, to Swales (1981), is a text segment that consists of a package of various linguistic features such as lexicon, syntax, and illocutionary propositions which are responsible for providing the given segment a uniform orientation and signal the content of the discourse. These moves can be inferred through context, but they are mainly examined based on their linguistic clues. Further, a move within a text can be considered any portion of that text that is either written or spoken and achieves a particular function within that text. However, not all elements of a text are obligatory and many elements, such as certain moves, can be considered optional (Henry & Roseberry, 2001a).

Moves are considered consequential because while the language of a genre as a whole is useful, the specific language associated with each move must also be considered if a writer is to be wholly accepted by the genre community. As a heuristic device, writers need to understand the premise behind each move and then decide what strategy can be used concerning the written application of that move (Henry & Roseberry, 2001a). This paper also assumes, as Connor, Precht, and Upton (2002) assumed, that genres have cultural expectations and when a writer moves between cultures with the same genre, some relearning of the genre must take place in order to correctly negotiate the cultural differences within the same genre. In this way, writing for a new cultural group presupposes the need to relearn the genre within that cultural group.

The basic principle that underlies genre analysis then is that specific moves and structures within a text can be isolated and examined to discover the structure of certain genres with reference to their allowable move order, move construction, and linguistic features. The ability to identify these key linguistic structures allows for a greater understanding of genres and further allows for this understanding to be passed on to others outside of the genre in order to assist in their understanding and eventual assimilation into the genre.

3. Case study: cover letters

For this study, a corpus of 34 cover letters written by native speakers and non-native speakers of English was selected. The applicants had applied to an aeronautical engineering firm and a hardware production company in the United States.² Twelve of

² It should be emphasized that these cover letters were not produced in a classroom, but are artifacts of genuine attempts to acquire a job.

the cover letters collected were written by L2 writers³, while the remaining 22 were written by L1 writers. Cover letters were selected for this exploratory, chronotopic analysis because of their wide use within the business community, the plethora of prior research conducted on them, and their relative simplicity (Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 2001a; Upton, 2002). Less explored genres such as legal briefs, academic writings, or business compositions were avoided at this time because these genres and the past research conducted within them were not as accommodating to an initial investigation as cover letters were.

The intention of a cover letter is simple: to obtain an interview. This is done by candidates augmenting the information found in their resume, which is usually attached to the cover letter. Cover letters were initially examined by Bhatia in his book *Analyzing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings* (1993). Bhatia was able to explain the first seven moves found in a cover letter, but his main concern was not to illuminate the purpose of the cover letter, but rather to compare it to the structure of a sales promotion. A more in depth analysis of cover letters was done later by Henry and Roseberry (2001a), who analyzed a corpus of 40 cover letters in order to identify the moves of cover letters, the allowable move order, and the strategies used to realize the moves. In doing so, they established obligatory and optional moves of the cover letters and then created a separate corpus for each move.

Henry and Roseberry (2001a) identified eleven moves in their corpus of cover letters, three of these moves (opening, polite ending, and signing off) were also common moves found in all business letters (see Table 1).

Some of this analysis contains what Upton, in his study of direct mail letters, referred to as structural elements. These include elements such as date lines, address information, salutations, complimentary closes, and signature information (Upton, 2002). It appears that while structural elements are important to the framing of a cover letter, their individual meaning is not so much dependent upon the writer's intention as much as upon their inclusion by the writer. Structural elements are for the most part standardized patterns that rarely differ from one writer to another. According to Upton, some structural elements are obligatory (salutations, complementary close), while others are optional (address info). Obligatory and optional structural elements likely only affect the meaning of a cover letter when a writer neglects to include them. For the purpose of this paper, it is interesting to note that these structural elements are easily distinguished from other moves because of their lack of spatio-temporal markers. If, according to a theory of chronotopic move analysis, a move is comprised of its spatio-temporal markers, then structural elements cannot be considered moves, but rather as obligatory or voluntary structural arrangements that influence the meaning of the text and the purpose mainly through their inclusion or exclusion. With this in mind, this paper will not consider two of Henry and Roseberry's moves (the opening and the signing off) as moves at all, but rather as structural elements.

Additionally, Henry and Roseberry (2001a) noted that in the cover letter, as the emphasis changed, so did the tense used. They concluded, however, that cover letters did not seem to have any "obvious linguistic markers of move boundaries (p. 158)."

³ The L2 writers in this investigation came from a variety of backgrounds. Many came from Asia and Europe, but there were also a few from Latin America. The L2 writers were generally well educated and had spent time living and studying in the United States. All had at least a Bachelor's Degree from an American university and a few were holders of a Ph.D.

Table 1

Moves of the cover letter and their definitions according to Henry and Roseberry (2001a)

Move	Definition
1. Opening	The writer identifies the target and invites the target to read the letter
2. Referring to job advertisement	The writer refers to the advertisement in which the position was named and described
3. Offering candidature	The writer states an interest in applying for the position
4. Stating reasons for applying	The writer gives reasons for wanting the position
5. Stating availability	The writer indicates when he or she will be able to take up the position
6. Promoting the candidate	The writer presents selected information demonstrating qualifications and abilities relevant to the desired position
7. Stipulating terms and conditions of employment	The writer indicates expectations regarding salary, working hours, and other relevant contractual matters
8. Naming referees	The candidate names referees who will support the candidature
9. Enclosing documents	The writer lists documents enclosed with the letter
10. Polite ending	The writer ends the letter in a conventional manner
11. Signing off	The writer signs his or her name in a respectful manner, thus claiming ownership of the letter

Their examples of tense constructions included the dependency on the past tense in stating how skills and abilities were obtained, the use of simple present tense in listing relevant skills, abilities, and qualification, and the use of present tenses in naming present jobs. The research presented in this paper provides evidence that when these same temporal constructions are coalesced with their spatial equivalents, a basis can be discerned for extricating move boundaries. That is to say, using the chronotope as a guide, moves can be separated from each other and boundaries can be formed based on linguistic markers.

Lastly, many moves that were either not noted by Henry and Roseberry (2001a) or amalgamated into one general move have been separated in this paper based on their differing chronotopes and generic intention. These include the moves “Introduction of the Candidate,” “Requesting Contact,” “Requesting Receipt,” and “Expression of Appreciation.”⁴ Also, this research indicates that the two moves “Offering Candidature” and “Stating Reason for Applying” share the same chronotope and generally the same generic intention and therefore should be considered as one move instead of two.

4. Research methods

According to Kinneavy (1971), the purpose of a text helps to shape the text and, as a result, cross-cultural differences found within the written text could significantly change the intended meaning. Therefore, the research presented here will look for systematic variation in performance between L1 writers and L2 writers based on the linguistic features used to denote spatio-temporal perspectives. As Connor et al. (2002) identify, contrastive rhetoric does argue for broad universal features in writing, but many language subtleties that help to express the purpose of a text have been overlooked in previous research. These language subtleties include such things as the discourse, syntax, and lexical structure of the text. The chronotopic approach of this paper will analyze these “language subtleties” and

⁴ Many of these moves are similar to those noted by Connor, Davis, and de Rycker (1995).

investigate how they correlate to the broader features of individual moves in a cross-cultural environment.⁵

As it is widely argued that temporal markers are used to control rhetorical functions (Fowler, 1990; Genette, 1980; Swales, 1991; and Toolan, 1997), this paper will look at the tense, temporal aspects, and temporal cue words found within each move to locate the temporal perspective of the move chronotope. To facilitate this, the cover letters were first coded into moves by two trained raters, who had a .91 correlation in identifying and categorizing the moves. The individual moves were then tagged for time and aspect using Connexor's EngLite Parser (Voutilainen & Tapanainen, 2003). The Connexor parser tags main verbs as being present tense, progressive aspect, infinitive, past tense, past participle, subjunctive or imperative. All these tags, except the subjunctive,⁶ were used to gather information about the temporal perspectives used in the various moves of the cover letter. The present tense and progressive aspect were combined and considered to constitute the "present" temporal perspective, while the past tense and the past participle were combined and considered to constitute the "past" temporal perspective. Infinitives were ignored as they provide no temporal clues out of context; imperatives, however, were kept as they are generally indicative of a future action (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985). The Connexor parser also tags modal auxiliary verbs. Because of the various semantic potential of modal verbs, the findings of the parser were augmented by a hand coded search that looked only for modals of volition and intention (*would* and *will*) (Quirk et al., 1985). The modals of volition and intention, along with imperatives, were then considered to represent the "future" temporal perspective. Because the corpus consisted of texts that were of different sizes, the findings were next normalized. The temporal perspectives of L2 moves were then compared to those of L1 moves using χ^2 tests to test for significance. Lastly, temporal cue words were located using a word frequency analysis and compared. These temporal cue words included temporal adverbs (e.g., forward, currently) and time stamps (e.g., dates and times) taken from Quirk et al. (1985).

When searching for spatial perspective, Bierwisch's (1996) theory of lexical semantics was used. This theory states that syntax and morphology are too ambiguous to accurately reflect spatial information and, instead, the field of lexical semantics can be depended on to locate conceptual space in language. In applying this theory, a word frequency analysis was used as a measure of semantic distinction. A model such as this uses precise semantic analysis based on binary decision criteria and is the most commonly used method in content analysis, having been extensively used in corpus linguistics (Biber, 1988). In order to take into account the difference in size between the texts in the corpus, the findings were normalized. The individual moves were then analyzed for the most frequent lexicon. The lexicon that comprised each move was then sorted for the most frequent content words that provided spatial information. The semantic fields were then given an impressionistic label based on the perceived intentions of the spatial lexicon. In some cases, lexica were excised from the dominant semantic field if they did not align well with the assumed purpose of the spatial markers. The most common of these are included in the analysis for

⁵ A lexical and syntactic reading of the chronotope is one among many possible interpretations of Bakhtin's original theory.

⁶ The subjunctive is not included in this analysis because of the sparseness of its occurrence in both the L1 and the L2 corpora.

Table 2a

 χ^2 test results for referring to job advertisement moves to corpus analysis: spatial lexicon normalized occurrence

	Move Mean	Corpus Mean	χ^2
Newspaper	30.7	1.5	568.4**
Position	23.9	3.6	114.5**
Advertisement	24.0	1.0	529.0**
Response	13.7	0.7	241.4**
<i>Most frequent words excised from semantic field</i>			
Resume	10.3	3.6	12.0**
Company	6.9	8.3	0.3

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

comparison. The occurrence of the final lexicon for each semantic field was then compared between L1 and L2 moves for significance using χ^2 tests.⁷

5. Findings

5.1. Referring to job advertisement

5.1.1. Spatial perspectives

The spatial perspective for this move has been labeled “Informational” as the space referred to involves the acknowledgement of existing information shared between the writer and the reader. The primary spatial words used to construct this semantic field include lexica such as “newspaper,” “position,” “advertisement,” and “response.” These words were the most commonly occurring nouns in the sample analyzed, and a crosswise comparison between their occurrence in the individual move and their occurrence within the corpus as a whole demonstrates that they are significantly more likely to occur within the move “Referring to Job Advertisement” than in the general corpus (see Table 2a).

While both L1 and L2 writers shared a similar spatial perspective when applying this move, they differed noticeably in the lexicon they used. The most common spatial markers used by L1 writers showed significant differences from those used by L2 writers. These included the lexica newspaper, position, advertisements, and response. L2 writers, in contrast, referred significantly more often to the name of the company itself, locations outside of the company where they were informed of the available position, or conferences than did L1 writers (see Table 2b).

5.1.2. Temporal perspectives

A significant difference also existed in the temporal perspectives used by L1 and L2 writers. For this move, the most common tense used in L1 writing was the present tense followed by the past tense. However, when compared to L1 writers, L2 writers significantly favored the past tense, $X^2(1, N = 36) = 23.07, p < .001$, but used the present tense at a

⁷ A few moves (Introduction of Applicant and Requesting Receipt) occurred too seldom in the corpus for an accurate analysis to be done. In addition, the move Stipulating Terms and Conditions of Employment was seldom used by L2 writers in this corpus, but was common in L1 writers. This allowed for a chronotope to be established, but no comparison to be made.

Table 2b

 χ^2 test results for referring to job advertisement L1 to L2 analysis: most common spatial markers used

Spatial markers	df	N	M(L1)	M(L2)	χ^2
<i>Frequent in L1 writers</i>					
Newspaper	1	36	30.7	3.4	21.9**
Position	1	36	23.9	6.8	9.5*
Response	1	36	13.7	0	13.7**
Advertisement	1	36	24.0	3.4	15.5**
<i>Frequent to L2 writers</i>					
Company name	1	36	6.8	23.8	9.4*
Other locations	1	36	0	17.0	17.0**
Conferences	1	36	0	10.2	10.2**

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

Table 2c

 χ^2 test results for referring to job advertisement temporal L1 to L2 analysis

	Global tenses	L1 tense frequency	L2 tense frequency
	Not normalized	Normalized	Normalized
Present	.59	44.4	44.2
Past	.41	30.7	81.6**
Modal auxiliaries	.13	10.2	6.8
Imperative	–	–	–

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

similar frequency, $\chi^2(1, N = 36) = 0, p > .05$. The use of modal auxiliary verbs in this move was relatively infrequent, while imperatives did not occur (see Table 2c for more detail).

5.1.3. Examples from corpus (referring to job advertisement)

L1: I am sending a follow-up to your advertisement for an Experimental aerodynamicist in the Los Angeles Times on 5th September.

L2: I found the advertisement on the Los Angeles Times and in the web site.

5.2. Stating reasons for applying

5.2.1. Spatial perspectives

Both L1 and L2 writers share similar spatial perspectives when using this move. This space has been labeled “Positional” as the semantic field encountered refers to the possibility of the applicant acquiring a position within the company. The lexicon that makes up this semantic field includes words like “company,” “position,” “industry,” and “opportunity.” These words were among the most commonly occurring nouns in the sample analyzed and a cross-wise comparison between their occurrence in the individual move and their occurrence within the corpus as a whole demonstrates that they are significantly more likely to occur within the move “Stating Reasons for Applying” than in the general corpus (see Table 3a).

Table 3a

 χ^2 test results for stating reasons for applying moves to corpus analysis: spatial lexicon normalized occurrence

	Move	Corpus	χ^2
	Mean	Mean	
Company	22.4	8.3	24.0**
Position	10.0	3.6	11.4**
Industry	6.7	1.3	22.4**
Opportunity	6.7	2.5	7.1*
<i>Most frequent words excised from semantic field</i>			
Research	7.8	2.9	8.3*
Skills	6.8	4.6	1.0
Qualification	4.7	.1	148.5**

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

Table 3b

 χ^2 test results for stating reason for applying L1 to L2 analysis: most common spatial markers used

Spatial markers	df	N	M(L1)	M(L2)	χ^2
<i>Frequent to L1 writers</i>					
Industry	1	36	6.7	0	6.7*
<i>Shared between L1 and L2 writers</i>					
Company	1	36	22.4	29.4	1.0
Position	1	36	10.0	11.7	1.3
Opportunity	1	36	6.7	5.8	0.1

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

L1 and L2 writers both discussed the position and how it related to their past research and experience using the above spatial lexica; however, L1 writers were significantly more likely to discuss themselves in relation to their interests in the industry than L2 writers. L1 and L2 writers used the remaining lexicon that constructed this semantic field with similar frequency (see Table 3b).

5.2.2. Temporal perspectives

For this move, the tense most commonly used was the present tense. L1 and L2 writers showed no significant difference in their temporal perspectives in this move with regards to their respective use of the present tense, (1, $N = 36$) = 3.14, $p > .05$, and the past tense, (1, $N = 36$) = 1.14, $p > .05$. L2 writers, however, were significantly more likely to use the future aspect, (1, $N = 36$) = 6.29, $p < .05$, and more specifically showed significant differences in their use of the future modal “would,” (1, $N = 36$) = 14.23, $p < .001$, and significant differences in their use of the modal of possibility “could,” (1, $N = 36$) = 6.70, $p < .05$, as compared to L1 writers. L1 writers were more likely to use the future modal “will,” (1, $N = 36$) = 2.60, $p > .05$, but not significantly so. A temporal cue word employed about equally by both L1 and L2 writers was the word “currently.” Imperatives were not used by either L1 or L2 writers (see Table 3c for more detail).

Table 3c

 χ^2 test results for stating reasons for applying temporal L1 to L2 analysis

	Global tenses	L1 tense frequency	L2 tense frequency
	Not normalized	Normalized mean	Normalized mean
Present	.73	74.9	54.7
Past	.24	26.8	19.5
Modal auxiliaries	.14	21.2	41.0*
Imperative	–	–	–
Would	–	6.7	25.4**
Could	–	1.1	7.8*
Will	–	6.7	2.0
Currently	–	3.4	2.0

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

5.2.3. Examples from corpus (stating reasons for applying)

L1: Upon viewing the company online portfolio, I can immediately tell yours is a company that strives for and achieves excellence, innovation, and foreword thinking in your designs. My goals are quite the same.

L2: As my BS degree is ready I am looking for an engineering position in an aerospace technology, related company. I would like to work in your company and utilize my engineering experience and knowledge. It would be great opportunity for me if I get the engineering experience from your company. I would like to develop my career as an engineer in your company.

5.3. Promoting the candidate

5.3.1. Spatial perspectives

The impressionistic space that this move appears to take is an “Experiential” space that is generally educative or professional. In general, the spatial chronotope of this move is shared between both L1 and L2 writers. The move is not as well defined semantically as other moves because of the broad sense of space it has and the fact that the move “promoting candidate” is very flexible and the lexicon that makes up its semantic field is often found interspersed in other moves. The semantic field chosen did not demonstrate a significant difference from the entire corpus, but the lexicon that comprises it consisted of nearly all the most frequent content words in the move and, when compared to the entire corpus, the words that encompass this semantic field were scaled higher on the move frequency list than on the corpus frequency list. The primary semantic measures for this space included lexica such as “experience,” “skills,” “analysis,” “management,” “research,” and “university” (see Table 4a).

In general, L1 writers were significantly more likely to discuss their skills than L2 writers, while L2 writers were significantly more likely to discuss their experience at the university and the research they had conducted. In consideration of general experience, analyses, and management abilities, L1 writers and L2 writers showed little difference (see Table 4b).

Table 4a

 χ^2 test results for promoting candidate moves to corpus analysis: spatial lexicon normalized occurrence

	Move Mean	Corpus Mean	χ^2
Experience	7.9	6.4	0.4
Skills	5.8	4.6	0.3
Analysis	5.4	3.2	1.5
Management	3.7	2.4	0.7
Research	3.3	2.9	0.1
University	3.1	2.1	0.5
<i>Most frequent words excised from semantic field</i>			
Company	6.5	8.3	0.4
Test	4.9	3.0	1.3

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

Table 4b

 χ^2 test results for promoting candidate L1 to L2 analysis: most common spatial markers used

Spatial markers	df	<i>N</i>	M(L1)	M(L2)	χ^2
<i>Frequent to L1 writers</i>					
Skills	1	36	5.8	0.8	3.9*
<i>Frequent to L2 writers</i>					
University	1	36	3.1	15.0	7.9*
Research	1	36	3.3	10.5	3.8*
<i>Shared between L1 and L2 writers</i>					
Experience	1	36	7.9	7.5	0.0
Analysis	1	36	5.4	3.0	0.7
Management	1	36	3.7	1.5	0.9

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

5.3.2. Temporal perspectives

This move used both the present tense and the past tense. In regards to this temporal perspective, L1 writers were more evenly divided in their use of both the past and present tenses, while L2 writers were more likely to refer to their experiences using the present tense than the past tense. When compared crosswise with L1 writers, L2 writers employed the use of the past tense significantly more often, (1, $N = 36$) = 5.03, $p < .05$. L1 writers, however, were significantly more likely to use the present perfect to speak of past experiences than were L2 writers, (1, $N = 36$) = 21.297, $p < .001$. The use of modal auxiliary verbs in this move was relatively infrequent, while imperatives were not used by either L1 or L2 writers (see Table 4c for more detail).

5.3.3. Examples from corpus (promoting the candidate)

L1: Both my undergraduate and graduate degrees focused heavily on aeronautical analysis and associated laboratory procedures. In addition, my industry and educational backgrounds also include a great deal of experience with low-speed aerodynamics and numerical simulation. I have worked with towing tanks for

Table 4c

 χ^2 test results for promoting candidate temporal L1 to L2 analysis

	Global tenses	L1 tense frequency	L2 tense frequency
	Not normalized	Normalized mean	Normalized mean
Present	.59	44.4	44.2
Past	.41	30.7	81.6*
Modal auxiliaries	.13	10.2	6.8
Imperative	–	–	–
Auxiliary have		275.7	177.4**

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

hydrodynamic modeling. I have been involved in all stages of testing, including experimental design, test article fabrication, and data acquisition, analysis, and validation. I have also modified and repaired wind tunnels for the purpose of meeting custom testing requirements.

L2: I'm particularly interested in aerodynamics and the research in this domain. Beside I have carried out a placement last summer with a company in the England where I worked in the aerodynamics team on "hybrid laminar flow wings". I also have a research project in connection with them during this academic year. Through this project, we essentially use Fluent and experimental results for our work.

5.4. Enclosing documents

5.4.1. Spatial perspectives

The spatial perspective that is shared by both L1 and L2 writers for this move has been labeled "Textual" space. This is based on common lexicon shared between the moves that comprise this semantic field and generally refers to an attached or enclosed resume with additional attachments or enclosures (including mailers and portfolios). All of these items are textual in their nature and help define the space of this move. The most common lexica used within this semantic space include words such as "resume," "copy," and "references." These words were among the most frequently occurring nouns in the sample analyzed, and a crosswise comparison between their occurrence in the individual move and their occurrence within the corpus as a whole demonstrates that they are significantly more likely to occur within the move "Enclosing Documents" than in the general corpus (see Table 5a).

When comparing L1 moves to L2 moves, no significant difference was noted for the key words "resume" and "reference." A significant difference was noted for the word "copy," with L1 writers using it more frequently than L2 writers (see Table 5b).

5.4.2. Temporal perspectives

The general temporal perspective of this move is the present tense, although the use of the past tense is common. In comparison to L1 writers, L2 writers' use of the present tenses showed no significant difference, $(1, N = 36) = .17, p > .05$; however, significant differences were noted between the use of the past tense, $(1, N = 36) = 5.64, p < .05$, modals, $(1, N = 36) = 4.32, p < .05$, and imperatives, $(1, N = 36) = 14.08, p < .001$. In this sense, L2 writers were more prone to depend on the past tense and modals than L1 writers

Table 5a

 χ^2 test results for enclosing documents moves to corpus analysis: spatial lexicon normalized occurrence

	Move Mean	Corpus Mean	X^2
Resume	70.4	3.6	1239.5**
Copy	18.7	1.3	232.9**
References	15.1	0.7	296.2**
<i>Most frequent words excised from semantic field</i>			
Work	14.8	3.6	34.2**
Abilities	9.4	0.7	107.9**

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

Table 5b

 χ^2 test results for enclosing documents L1 to L2 analysis: most common spatial markers used

Spatial markers	df	N	M(L1)	M(L2)	X^2
<i>Frequent to L1 writers</i>					
Copy	1	36	18.9	0	18.9**
<i>Shared between L1 and L2 writers</i>					
Resume	1	36	70.4	83.3	1.1
Reference	1	36	15.1	20.8	.9

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

Table 5c

 χ^2 test results for enclosing documents temporal L1 to L2 analysis

	Global tenses	L1 tense frequency	L2 tense frequency
	Not normalized	Normalized mean	Normalized mean
Present	.45	56.3	52.1
Past	.37	46.9	72.9*
Modal auxiliaries	.07	9.4	20.8*
Imperative	.10	14.1	–**

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

and were unfamiliar with the use of imperatives as an accepted linguistic strategy for this move (see Table 5c for more detail).

5.4.3. Examples from corpus (enclosing documents)

L1: Please find my resume attached in reference to Aerospace Engineering opportunities at “name of company.”

L2: Enclosed is my resume for your review.

Table 6a

 χ^2 test results for requesting contact moves to corpus analysis: spatial words normalized occurrence

	Move Mean	Corpus Mean	χ^2
Phone	23.8	3.6	113.3**
Discuss(ion)	20.6	2.4	138.0**
Qualification	13.6	4.8	16.1**
Contact	11.9	2.1	45.7**
E-mail	8.5	1.6	29.8**
Meet(ing)	6.8	1.1	29.6**
Interview	6.8	1.1	29.6**
<i>Most frequent words excised from semantic field</i>			
Company	6.8	8.3	.3
Experience	5.1	6.4	.3

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

Table 6b

 χ^2 test results for requesting contact L1 to L2 analysis: most common spatial markers used

Spatial markers	df	<i>N</i>	M(L1)	M(L2)	χ^2
<i>Frequent to L1 writers</i>					
Qualification	1	36	13.6	0	13.6**
<i>Frequent to L2 writers</i>					
Contact	1	36	11.9	23.5	3.8*
<i>Shared between L1 and L2 writers</i>					
Phone	1	36	23.8	23.5	0
Discussion	1	36	20.6	10.1	3.6
Meet(ing)	1	36	6.8	6.7	0
Interview	1	36	6.8	10.1	0.6
E-mail	1	36	8.5	13.5	1.1

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

5.5. Requesting contact

5.5.1. Spatial perspective

Both L1 and L2 writers recognized the spatial perspective of the move as being “Communicative,” with the specific intent being to obtain an interview. The semantic field for this spatial perspective is comprised of lexica such as “phone,” “discuss,” “qualification,” “contact,” “e-mail,” “meet,” and “interview,” which all showed significant differences in frequency when compared crosswise between the move and the entire corpus (see Table 6a).

Both L1 and L2 writers shared common semantic fields in the writing of this move and no significant differences were noted between the words “phone,” “discussion,” “meet (ing),” “interview,” or “e-mail.” L1 writers were again significantly more likely to discuss

Table 6c
 χ^2 test results for requesting contact temporal L1 to L2 analysis

	Global tenses	L1 tense frequency	L2 tense frequency
	Not normalized	Normalized mean	Normalized mean
Present	.66	66.3	47.1
Past	.19	18.7	10.1
Modal auxiliaries	.26	44.2	60.6
Imperative	.09	10.2	3.4*
Would	–	11.9	20.2
Can	–	10.2	13.5
Future		1.1	5.9

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .001$.

their qualifications than L2 writers. L2 writers were significantly more likely to employ the word “contact” than L1 writers as well (see Table 6b).

5.5.2. Temporal perspective

Both L1 and L2 writers used a similar temporal perspective when constructing this move (present tense), and both effectively used modals to refer to the future possibility of conducting an interview with the employer as well as temporal cue words. L2 writers used the present tense (1, $N = 36$) = 1.12, $p > .05$, and the past tense, (1, $N = 36$) = 1.12, $p > .05$, less often than L1 writers, but not significantly so. L2 writers also used modal aspects more often than L1 writers, but not significantly so (1, $N = 36$) = 1.12, $p > .05$. L1 writers, however, were significantly more likely to use imperatives than L2 writers, (1, $N = 36$) = 1.12, $p < .05$. Both L1 and L2 writers showed a strong dependency on modals of possibility such as “would” and “can”, which they employed as politeness strategies, but there was no significant difference in their use. L2 users were more likely to use the temporal cue word “future,” but not significantly so, (1, $N = 36$) = 3.23, $p > .05$ (see Table 6c for more detail).

5.5.3. Examples from corpus (requesting contact)

L1: I am excited about the opportunities that your company may hold and am eager to discuss how I may become a part of the team.

L2: I hope I have a chance to interview with you so that you could get to know me better.

5.6. Acknowledging appreciation

5.6.1. Spatial perspective

All writers, regardless of first language, adhered to the same chronotope with regards to this move. This is likely because the move is highly formulaic in its nature with most examples being comprised of the phrase “thank you for your time (and consideration).” Nevertheless, the move does appear to have a unique chronotope with the spatial perspective being labeled a “Considerate” space directed at the reader. This is clearly seen in the use of

Table 7a

 χ^2 test results for acknowledging appreciation moves to corpus analysis: spatial lexicon normalized occurrence

	Move Mean	Corpus Mean	χ^2
Thank	109.6	1.4	8269.8**
Consideration	109.6	2.1	5441.7**
Time	82.2	2.0	3200.0**

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

Table 7b

 χ^2 test results for acknowledging appreciation L1 to L2 analysis: most common spatial markers used

Spatial Markers	df	<i>N</i>	M(L1)	M(L2)	χ^2
<i>Frequent to L1 writers</i>					
Consideration	1	36	109.6	49.2	23.0**
<i>Shared between L1 and L2 writers</i>					
Thank	1	36	109.6	114.8	0.1
Time	1	36	82.2	98.4	1.5

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

Table 7c

 χ^2 test results for acknowledging appreciation temporal L1 to L2 analysis

	Global tenses Not normalized	L1 tense frequency Normalized mean	L2 tense frequency Normalized mean
Present	.92	164.4	163.9
Past	.08	13.7	–**
Modal auxiliaries	–	–	–
Imperative	–	–	–
Forward		18.7	–**

* $p < .05$.** $p < .001$.

the spatial markers “consideration,” “thank,” and “time” in the move, which all showed significance in frequency differences when compared crosswise between the move and the entire corpus (see Table 7a).

In the use of this semantic field, no significant differences were noted between the use of the words “thank” and “time.” A significant difference was noted in the use of the word “consideration,” with L2 writers being less likely to refer to the reader’s consideration than L1 writers (see Table 7b).

5.6.2. Temporal perspective

The general temporal perspective of this move is the present. Both L1 and L2 writers seem to subscribe to this temporal perspective and no significant difference was noted in their use of the present tense, (1, $N = 36$) = .001, $p > .05$. A significant difference was noted in the use of the past tense, (1, $N = 36$) = 13.69, $p < .001$, which was used occasionally by

L1 writers, but not by L2 writers in this corpus. L1 writers were also significantly more likely to use the temporal cue word “forward,” (1, $N = 36$) = 18.71, $p < .001$ than L2 writers in this corpus. The imperative was not used (see Table 7c for more detail).

5.6.3. Examples from corpus (acknowledging appreciation)

L1: Thank you for your time and consideration.

L2: Thank you for your kind attention and hoping to hear from you soon.

6. Discussion

In view of the above analysis, it appears that each move has a unique, primary spatio-temporal perspective. This perspective, referred to as the move’s chronotope, seems to help shape the move and delimit the move’s boundaries, which separate the move from those that precede and follow it. Since all discourse is the result of a particular speaker occupying a particular space at a particular time (Toolan, 1997), spatio-temporal perspectives within cover letters seem to have an intrinsic function in portraying purpose and meaning in moves. This approach toward embodiment of purpose serves to locate the writer in a specific time and space and presents the writer within this time and space in order to portray amodal communication as being more grounded in a temporal and spatial reality that can be better understood by the reader. The use of Bahktin’s chronotope helps to flesh out what these temporal and spatial perspectives are and how they are used within different moves to represent different intentions. While the chronotopic perspectives discussed here demonstrate variation within the moves themselves, primary temporal and spatial perspectives are apparent (see Table 8 for an overview). While the general semantic fields that structure spatial perspectives within moves were recognized and generally followed by both L1 and L2 writers, there was more deviation in the use of temporal perspective than spatial perspectives across moves. These deviations should not be indicative of weak chronotopic cohesion within moves, but rather of supporting the idea that genres are living texts that change with the needs of the users and accept, to a certain degree, irregularity over time. Accordingly, genres should not be seen as rigid formulas, but permeable organizations of moves that are able to accept change.

Table 8
Summary of chronotopic move analysis

Move	Spatial perspective	Temporal perspective
Introduction of applicant ^a	Personal (writer)	Present
Referring to job advertisement	Informational	Present
Stating reasons for applying	Positional	Present (future aspect)
Promoting candidate	Experiential	Past/present
Stipulating terms of employment ^a	Expectational	Present (future aspect)
Requesting contact	Communicative	Present (future aspect)
Enclosing documents	Textual	Present (past common)
Expressing appreciation	Considerate	Present
Requesting receipt ^a	Responsive	Present (future aspect)

^a A more complete analysis of these moves was not possible as the corpus for these moves was too small. The findings here are preliminary and based on the limited information available.

As well as the categorization of moves based on the chronotope, this research also considered dissimilarities between L1 writers and L2 writers in their production of chronotopic moves. While differences were documented between the two groups, it should be noted that L2 writers generally produced cover letters that adhered to the principles of a generic moves analysis. In terms of the use of appropriate moves and the ordering of these moves, most of the L2 writers in this corpus seemed competent in producing cover letters that followed the expected structural requirements. A deeper analysis of these moves based on the chronotope revealed that although the L2 writers followed the proper structure for producing a cover letter, they were often unaware of the chronotopic syntactic and semantic expectations that occur within the moves themselves. This analysis of L2 cover letters reveals that while L2 writers often keep to the primary spatial expectations of a move, they may sometimes use lexicon that are not within the semantic fields constructed by L1 writers. Additionally, L2 writers may not use accepted spatial markers to the same degree as L1 writers. The use of temporal perspectives, however, seems to be more problematic for L2 writers, who frequently assembled moves in this corpus based on a temporal perspective outside that which is ordinarily used by L1 writers. This includes significant differences in the use of the past tense in the move “Referring to Job Advertisement,” the use of modal auxiliaries in the move “Stating Reasons for Applying,” the use of the past tense in the move “Promoting Candidate,” the use of both the past tense and modal auxiliaries in the move “Enclosing Documents,” the use of imperatives in the move “Requesting Contact,” and the use of the past tense in the move “Acknowledging Appreciation.” Some of the differences in the use of modal auxiliaries can be attributed to the use of politeness strategies, especially in the move “Stating Reasons for Applying,” where the use of modals as hedges allows the L2 writer to appear more deferential toward their future prospects within the company and not break any politeness strategies rules such as face saving. This is in comparison to L1 writers, who appeared comfortable, to some degree, with using the modal “will” as compared to L2 writers who, apparently, were uneasy making such a firm commitment. Many of these differences in temporal perspectives can probably be attributed to lack of knowledge about the intrinsic temporal properties of the moves.

In comparison to L1 writers, the misuse of the chronotopic perspectives within the various moves of the cover letter by L2 writers puts them in danger of breaking the generic conventions expected by the reader and possibly of losing the meaning and intention of the text and the objective that they are attempting to depict. Considering that the spatio-temporal perspectives of these moves can likely be isolated and examined, it seems logical that they can thus be used to instruct L2 writers and help them avoid generic mistakes that might at a minimum cost them a loss of meaning in their text and at a maximum result in the inability to convince the reader of their purpose. While this research has demonstrated the possibility of using the chronotope for moves-based instruction, it should not be seen as a definitive solution to student instruction. The chronotope, while providing a closer focus on the semantic and syntactic choices available within a move, is inconsequential in isolation. In the absence of student instruction involving rhetorical conventions, audience consideration, and detailed move analysis, the chronotope would conceptually fall short.

Already, a good portion of the work done in genre analysis is dedicated to the practical applications of genre analysis in the classroom. In relation to second language learners of specific genres in the classroom, genre analysts argue that genre specific compositions

require more skill than that supplied through general writing classes. In order to assist the second language writer, the situation, context, and stimulus of a writing assignment are crucial as they may allow writers to understand cultural differences found within genres and properly prepare students to avoid the mistakes associated with these differences (Upton & Connor, 2001). If these situations, contexts, and stimuli are not taught and L2 writers are unable to accurately write within a genre, readers may be both surprised and uncooperative in the translation of the non-standard genre produced. This is mostly because the readers want to share in the intention of the writer and the achievement that comes from co-participation. When this is not possible, the reader might be less willing to accept the meaning and intention of the writing. According to Bazerman (1994), writers that cannot create an impression of a genre will be unsuccessful; writers, therefore, are responsible for supporting their part of the generic exchange.

Research conducted in the classroom suggests that teaching ESP students the rationale and conventions of common research articles can lead to the production of texts by L2 students that match the reader's expectations with reference to the genre being used. In addition, the teaching of detailed moves has been shown to be successful in instructing beginning writers within specific genres. This past research helps to substantiate the idea that the teaching of genre can override first language schemata and can help ESP students better develop the cultural assumptions necessary to be successful in their second language (Henry & Roseberry, 2001b; Nwogu, 1991; Swales, 1991; Upton, 2002; and Upton & Connor, 2001).

Often teachers will assume that a student is ignorant of a "situation," when in reality that student may just as possibly be ignorant of a genre. Teachers need to be able to recognize the differences and realize that frequently the student understands the situation but fails to identify with and join in a writing process that they are not familiar with or have not studied (Devitt, 1993). The teaching of genre analysis is key, therefore, in order to raise the student's awareness of the implications of his or her writing, to assist in the student's pragmatic development, and, most importantly, to avoid costly mistakes that come from miscommunication (Pinto dos Santos, 2002).

As a result, genre analysis affects the very nature of teaching methodologies for language learning in such diverse fields as engineering, science, law, and business. The teaching of genre analysis allows the student to better understand the social codes used, the genre itself, and its cognitive structuring. The fundamental goal of the teaching of genre analysis is the eventual ownership of the genre on the part of the student. While accepted ESP theory believes that students need communicative competence and sociolinguistic competence to be successful in the modern, multinational business English world, the field is just beginning to realize that L2 students need generic competence as well (Bhatia, 1997).

7. Conclusion

In order for teachers to be effectively able to teach a genre, they should be aware of which linguistic features are acting at which time and how these linguistic strategies are realized in the moves of a genre. This must also stand true for the students themselves. As such, it seems evident that the further delimiting of moves based on their chronotopic variance could not only assist in allowing students and teachers to better understand what constitutes a genre but could also be used to instruct writers within specific genres and to assist teachers in locating errors within move sequences that would affect the overall effi-

ciency of the composition. While the chronotopic approach is not intended to be used as a stand alone heuristic, but instead is intended to be used in conjunction with other teaching approaches, it is, nevertheless, an important step in coming to better understand what effects semantic and syntactic choices produce in the intentionality of moves.

A chronotopic approach to genre analysis could not only enable students and teachers to better understand the underlying structures of a genre, but, more importantly, could enable students to more quickly acquire proficiency within the genre and join the discourse communities of their choosing. Once in these discourse communities, the students themselves will then have the opportunity to influence the shape and future of the genre and inevitably control the genre to their own benefit and to the benefit of the community at large.

The answer to student writing advancement in the ESP classroom is not to teach typology but rather genre analysis. A chronotopic approach to teaching genres would allow students to not only understand how the moves of a genre are formed, but would also allow students to better understand the choices that a genre permits. The chronotope as a pedagogical tool would help to better inform the L2 writer of the expected temporal and spatial conventions used by L1 writers. While additional research needs to be conducted in this approach, especially with regards to larger corpus analyses and the pedagogical significance of the chronotope, it seems apparent that introducing students to the syntactic and semantic practices that help to construct the move would be valuable.

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