# The Genre-based Approach to the Teaching of Greek Philological Courses

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance and role of the communicative-genre based approach in the teaching of philological courses. Also, mention and study the way in which the communicative- genre based approach can help the student both in his later communication course and in the social one. With the communicative- genre based approach, the student is invited to come into contact with different texts each time, to try to process them emphasizing on the functionality of the texts, their style and their critical reading, avoiding focusing on the syntax and vocabulary of the text. This teaching can be considered innovative because its focus is on the text itself, which is understood as a whole and operates in relation to the other linguistic elements. Furthermore, the communicative- genre based approach emphasizes the importance of the student's understanding and perception of the text and does not require him to focus on vocabulary and sentence syntax. It could be an alternative teaching that wants to promote the freedom of expression and thought of the student and the way he understands and perceives the text he processes as a whole. The

innovation of the communicative-text-centered approach lies in highlighting that it is an alternative technique that aims to enable the student to process and perceive the texts taught.

**Keywords:** communicative- approach, genre- based approach, teaching, expression, critical reading

## 1. Introduction

The term "communicative- approach" is a conceptual combination of the communicative-based approach and the genre-based approach. The combination of communicative and genre- based approaches began in the 1970s, when the interest of linguistic research shifted from the study of language to the learner's ability to cope with the communicative need of different types of text (Kress, 1994). In addition, the focus of teaching is transferred from vocabulary and syntax to the text itself, which constitutes a whole and operates in correlation with the other linguistic elements of the text (Mitsikopoulou, 2006). Furthermore, the communicative- approach underlines the social context in which writing is produced (Badger & White, 2000, p. 155).

The communicative- approach emerged in the 1970s, when the interest of linguistic research turned to the study of a technique that would be more communicative and functional (Chatzisavvidis, 2014) and that would help the student develop the ability to use language effectively for the production and processing of various kinds of text (Kostoulis, 2001). According to Georgakopoulou & Goutsos (2017, pp 19-20), the main goal of the communicative- approach is for the oral and written language of the student to function in the future as a form of expression of communicative language. In addition, Georgakopoulou & Goutsos (2017, pp 19-20) state that language is examined as a structured and conceptual text that is shaped according to communicative situations, such as who speaks, to whom it is addressed, what is the topic, what is the goal, when and how it is expressed through the text.

The genre- based approach appeared internationally in education in the 1980s (Coste, 1981: 35, Cope & Kalantzis, 1993: 22-37), while in Greek education it began to be used at the end of the 1990s, when early attempts were made to focus teaching on the language of the text (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 2011: 63-70, Spanos & Michalis, 2012: 132-138, Chatzisavvidis, 2003: 405-414). This alternative technique was created as research interest shifted from the suggestion of the text to the meaning of the text, to the cultivation of oral and written language and to the teaching of the textual dimension of grammar (Kostoulis, 2001). According to Ivanic (2004), genre- based is about the social purpose of language and the ways in which the linguistic features of specific genres or texts serve this communicative goal.

During the last language reform that took place in 2006-2007 in Greece and Cyprus, the coupling of the communicative- approach emerged (Chatzilouka- Mavri, 2010). According to Martin (2000: 116-126) this coupling arose as the genre-based approach does not differ from the communicative- approach in terms of the most important positions of language, concerning its communicative dimension.

## 2. Method

The main objective of this presentation is part of a broader research that utilizes the review of foreign and greek literature on the didactic possibilities of utilizing the genre- based approach in the teaching of greek philological subjects in secondary education. The search for relevant

- research in the foreign the linguistic literature was carried out on the basis of the terms communicative-approach, genre-centered approach, teaching, expression, criticism. The National Documentation Centre (https://www.ekt.gr/) and Scopus (https://www.scopus.com/home.uri), through which access to reputable scientific journals and doctoral dissertations is provided, while the search engine Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/) also used filters to search for research on genre-based approach. The initial search resulted in about 70 scientific papers. Some 17 documents were blocked because their content was not available Another 13 documents were rejected because their content had nothing to do with the genre-based approach. This process led to the final selection of 40 papers indexed on: (a) the year of their publication, (b) the subject area, (c) the genre-based approach that can be applied to greek philological subjects of secondary education. Based on this method, among other things, the gerne-based approach that can be applied in greek philological courses and constitutes an alternative teaching technique was codified.

## 3. The characteristics of the genre-based approach

The characteristics of the genre-based approach technique are (Tryfiatis, 2017): 1) The diversity, variety and differentiation of language. 2) The development of language competence through the development of communicative competence, which takes place in parallel, according to the frame of reference, e.g. The recipient, purpose, time, space. 3) Syntactic phenomena and vocabulary are studied in the text in a meaningful way, so that they can be used in specific communication conditions. 4) Grammar is not considered in isolation or in isolation from morphosyntactic phenomena. 5) Language acquisition can be achieved through knowledge and structure but also through the relationship between reality and language, purpose and form or the type of speech of the text (Martin, 2000: 116-126).

The genre-based approach, adopting what has been mentioned, organizes the framework of language teaching and learning. Cope & Kalantzis (2004: 55-62) state that with this technique the text is treated as a unit of speech that holds a defined functional role, is interpreted and utilized as a system that has independent but also linguistic groups, such as words and sentences, interdependent, which have linguistic coherence and conceptual coherence. Furthermore, Danassis-Afentakis (2009: 35-40) argue that the knowledge of words is a complex phenomenon, which from a linguistic point of view, spreads over three dimensions: 1) form, 2) meaning and 3) use. Therefore, teaching vocabulary requires a lot of effort and therefore its treatment should not be empirical, but systematic and methodical, according to the principles and findings of applied linguistics (Oxford, 2011: 87-94).

According to Tryfiatis (2017), vocabulary teaching is an effective teaching proposal, as it helps the student to enhance his language ability when done systematically and methodically. The basic elements of language competence include the terms of the language system, the rules of effective use of language according to the situation of communication and the expansion of vocabulary, which will help the student in structuring and understanding text. In addition, the teaching of vocabulary and, by extension, language, is the central axis of the

genre-based approach. Also, this approach emphasizes the conceptual sets formed between the sentences of the text and does not focus on the syntactic-grammatical phenomena by which the sentences are connected to each other. Georgakopoulou & Goutsos (2011:27) state that the background of text communication aims at the cultivation of oral and written language and the teaching of grammar and vocabulary of the text, which can help the student learn grammatical lexical phenomena from the text used.

The genre-based approach provides students with very specific information about the form, style, use of vocabulary and way of processing the text, enhancing the student's ability to understand the meaning of the text (Nordin, 2017). With this approach, students try to focus on the meaning of the text and be able to understand the vocabulary used, the style and the structure of the text (Matsagouras, 2001:200). Next, students are asked to rewrite a text, in which they attempt to express what was the meaning and message of the text they read, showing, in this way, whether they understood the text (Tribble, 1996).

During the teaching of the genre-based approach, the teacher plays the role of a guide (Kehl, 1970), listening to the texts written by the students and trying to help them so that they can correct their texts (Reid, 1993). In this way, students' freedom of thought and written expression enhanced, enabling them to improve themselves (Leki, 1992).

Tribble (1996) proposes four main roles for the teacher, who wants to use the technique of the genre-based approach: 1) the participant, 2) the assistant, 3) the mentor and 4) the evaluator. The teacher as a "participant" actively participates as a reader, providing answers to the ideas and/or feelings of the students they are trying to convey through their writing. On the other hand, the teacher, playing the role of assistant, encourages students to develop a structured written language, in the following ways: a) using the appropriate vocabulary, b) understanding the topic and purpose of the text, c) choosing the right type of text.

The role of the educational "mentor" offers the teacher the opportunity to observe and point out the weaknesses of his students and their overall performance.

The educational "evaluator" can carry out evaluations in the writing of his students' texts, helping them to identify any mistakes and gain the possibility of self-correction.

Firkins, Forey & Sengupta (2007) analyze how this technique can be used. They also mention the term "circular strategy" to define both the stages of teaching the genre- based approach and learning to write. In particular, the first stage is the stage of "modeling a text", where it includes four sub-stages, which must be carried out during teaching and learning: a) the teacher must choose a specific type of writing that meets the needs of the students and is understandable to them, as the students will be asked to process it, b) the teacher and the students discuss the type of text in an attempt to analyze and process it, c) the teacher directs the students to know and understand the function of the text and its communicative context (such as the type, process, writing, function of the process and purpose of the writing process), d) students are asked to study the uses of vocabulary, style and structural elements of the text (time, space, persons and meaning).

Badger & White (2000: 155) add that the genre-based approach emphasizes the social context in which writing is produced. Genre-based approach is based on the fact that the use of this technique should aim to offer students clear and systematic explanations of the ways in which language can work in social contexts (Hyland, 2003). Paltridge (2001) suggests that the genre-based approach could be used to help students broaden their thinking and improve their expression in writing. Paltridge (2001) say that through this technique the student is encouraged to reflect on how to use each text and the genre it belongs to and to be able to locate its central axis. Moreover, sentences are not examined and analyzed in isolation but their form and meaning are determined by their position in the text and the way they are used within the text (Hyland, 2007: 148-164).

According to Vygotsky (1978) the genre-based approach emphasizes the collaboration between teacher and student, having the teacher act as a "scaffolding" for the student or offer his support to students as they move towards knowledge. According to Nordin (2017) the technique of "scaffolding" can be used with the genre-based approach in combination, as the student can analyze the language and structure of the text, through the encouragement and assistance of the teacher. The student, after reading the text he was given to edit, produces a text where he mentions the basic elements of the text (Martin, 2007). The role of the teacher moves from instructor to facilitator, aiming at the student gaining autonomy. Also, Turner & Berkowitz (2006) argue that the teacher must ensure the interest and attention of the student, teaches the student to divide the text into subsections and makes sure that the student stays focused. The teacher aims at a twofold goal: 1) the student to become more familiar with the text and its communicative context and 2) to follow what the teacher taught him in order to process the text independently himself (Hudelson & Rigg, 1994).

## 4. The objectives of the genre-based approach and their stages

The most important goal of the approach is to have a successful transfer of reading and writing texts from school to work, but also to various social activities (Matsagouras, 2001). Writing takes place in three stages and seven phases. According to Matsagouras (2001) these are: 1) the pre-author, 2) the authorial and 3) the post-writing. The 1st stage includes phase a) authentication, b) generation of ideas and c) organization of ideas. The 2nd stage includes phase d) of the initial textualization and the 3rd stage of the phase e) the improved reformulation of the original text, f) the editing of the final text and g) the self- and hetero-evaluation of the final text and the writing processes.

The pre-writing stage includes the definition of the topic, the parameters of the communicative framework and the type of text. This stage has three phases. The first phase is called the authentication phase and in it the teacher guides the student without interfering to choose the topic of the text, to define the message he wants to express, to determine the content, structure, style and communication framework that he thinks fits, in this way the student authenticates his way of writing.

The second phase is called the idea generation phase and in it the teacher helps the student to produce speech through a series of techniques (such as the technique of images, the technique of questions, technique of narrative shape, technique of creative imitation).

The third phase is called the phase of organizing ideas and in it the student who has become a writer after having written his text looks for ways to organize his ideas that have emerged from the previous phases for coherence, coherence and sequencing.

The writing stage is the first attempt to record ideas in continuous discourse with linguistic coherence and conceptual coherence. This stage is the transitional phase in which the text produced will gradually undergo improvements and modifications until it reaches its final completed form (Vasilaki, 2018). In addition, this stage features the fourth phase. The fourth phase is called the initial textualization phase and in it the draft text written by the student in the previous phase must be transformed into continuous speech. In this phase the student's ideas become speech and take the form of a structured text. In this way, the text will be able to provide clarity and precision of information, linguistic coherence that suits the addressees. This process follows an evolutionary path depending on the student's development and learning capabilities (Matsagouras, 2004).

The post-writing stage processes the improvement of the original text, while the general editing of the final text and the evaluation of the final text and the writing procedures are carried out. This stage includes the fifth phase. The fifth phase is called the phase of improved reformatting of the original text, during which the teacher proposes techniques and criteria for individual and collective processing of the original text, as it resulted from the student's first attempt. In this phase, a student micro-group could be created. This micro-group can give feedback to students either orally or in writing immediately after reading the paper.

In the sixth phase, which is the final text editing phase, the final interventions and improvements are made, concerning grammatical-syntactic conventions of the written language, where they check the spelling, paragraphization, punctuation, syntax and tenses of the text. Before handing over his/her text to the teacher, the student needs to correct his/her possible grammatical, syntax, spelling and expressive errors, the use of punctuation, as well as to take care of the good image of his/her writing (Panteliadou, Patsiodimou, & Botsas, 2008).

In the seventh phase, which is the self- and other-evaluation of the final text and writing procedures, and in this phase procedures and indicators of evaluation of the text are proposed. Common criteria are considered acceptable: a) the structure of the text, b) accuracy, c) clarity, d) sequence of thoughts, e) syntax, f) verbal richness, g) substantiation of opinions, h) understanding of topic, i) completeness of development, j) spelling, k) general picture, l) originality of thoughts and m) style.

The teacher, using and applying this technique, which is divided into the aforementioned three stages and the seven individual phases, aims at a successful reading, comprehension and writing of the text by the student (Matsagouras, 2001).

**5. Example of the application of the genre- based approach in greek philology courses**

*5.1. Teaching Ancient Greek with a Genre-Based Approach*

The genre-based approach could be used in the course of Ancient Greek, verses 1-17 were chosen as an example of application from the Prologue of Sophocles' Antigone, which is taught in the second grade of General Lyceum.

The teaching objectives are:

A) Cognitive

The students understand the subject of the passage (prologue), learn the story of the tragedy and the heroes that appear understand if there is any identification with modern times and the way of thinking of the heroines.

B) Emotional

The students on the one hand to feel the pain and emotional charge and dynamism of Antigone and on the other hand to feel the hesitation and cowardice and submission of Ismene to patriarchal society.

C) Social

The students cooperate with each other, communicate support their response try to convince of the position of their views.

The teaching methods used are constructive, student-centered and small-group teaching. Teaching aids: the textbook

**Configuration of learning environment:**

The course environment is the classroom.

**Teaching implementation**

**Teaching phases**

**1st Phase: Learning readiness test (approximate duration: 5'- 7')**

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher mentions to the students the topic of teaching the prologue of Antigone's ancient Greek lesson and that it begins with the dialogue between the two brothers. The teacher begins reading the first verses 1-17 that were selected and then divides the painting into two columns and in one the name of Antigone is written and in the other the name of Ismene. In each column and under the name of each sister she writes the words (such as adjectives, nouns) that identify them. The teacher tells the students that the

sisters differ from each other in morality, way of thinking, the way they act and how they externalize their feelings.

**2nd Phase: offer of a new subject (approx. duration: 7'-10')**

According to the information we derive from the prologue, the teacher, apart from the differences mentioned for the two sisters in the 1st phase of teaching, also mentions the figures of speech, then the teacher presents how the student can identify and record them. Next, the student mentions whether there are similar contemporary examples of behaviors in everyday life. By drawing information and utilizing the method of dialogue, students are trained and able to identify differences and patterns of speech in any text. In this passage, through the dialogue between the two brothers, their ethos, their way of thinking, the way they act, the externalization of their emotions that differs, are described. With the use of figures of speech these differences become apparent and are easier to interpret and identify. The teacher with the use of dialogue and speech patterns tries to help students practice and familiarize themselves with the aim of better understanding the meaning of the text and the teaching objectives.

**3rd Phase: elaboration of the new subject (approximate duration: 20'-25')**

After providing the basic learning objectives of the teaching object, the teacher using the constructive and group method encourages students to divide into two groups. With the constructive method the student builds knowledge. The student constructs his own meaning through the experiences and the process of interaction of his original views, the new desired knowledge that can bring about changes in his original views. Then, using the group method, the teacher encourages the students to divide into groups and, after working together, to write a text that reflects Antigone and Ismene.

**4th Phase: evaluation (approximate duration: 5')**

During the evaluation phase of teaching, the percentage of achievement of the goals set at the beginning of the lesson is checked through the understanding of the passage and the writing of the students' new texts in terms of the relevance of the content, the communication goal, the understanding of the subject and the emotions of the heroines and the clarity at the level of expression and formulation of the content and figures of speech.

This technique can be applied in any course of philological students because it does not delve into grammatical-syntactic phenomena but to highlight the student's way of thinking and help him understand the meaning of the text as a whole.

**6. The role of the teacher in the genre-based approach**

The role of the teacher is basic and decisive as he does not intervene but advises and guides the student in knowledge and in order to acquire the possibility of self-correction and self-improvement (Rusinovci, 2015). In addition, the teacher is also a reader who responds to the ideas and feelings that students try to express with their texts. Kehl (1970) believed that the teacher should communicate with his students and treat them with sincere respect and be

interested in their improvement. The teacher helps students to choose in a targeted way the type of text they wish to write, the purpose of writing it and the use of appropriate vocabulary. It also highlights the key points, weaknesses and overall performance of students so that they can recognize their mistakes and correct them in the future.

## 7. Epilogue

The genre- based approach is an alternative technique that combines the active participation of both teacher and student. Its most basic feature is that the role of the teacher is guiding and advisory, helping the student learn to process texts as a whole. Hyland (2003) stated that the genre- based approach examines the relationship between language and its social functions and tries to show that text is an integrated whole that students can process and express its meaning. The Hyland disagrees with Halliday's (1989) view that students can use vocabulary to develop specific linguistic ways of achieving goals (such as writing a text) and that the final text will relate to the social context and other texts. The Hyland considers that when a text has the same social context, it shares the same structure and belongs to the same genre.

The genre- based approach treats the text as a whole and does not emphasize syntactic and grammatical phenomena but on identifying the subject and its meaning by students.

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