

## EMPIRICAL FEATURE ARTICLE

# From Saying to Communicating: The Generic Development of Classroom Academic Presentations by Chinese First-Year College Students

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**Received:** 22 June 2022 | **Revised:** 10 January 2025 | **Accepted:** 19 January 2025

**Funding:** This research was sponsored by the following three grants: grant from the Humanities and Social Science Foundation, Ministry of Education of China (19XJC740003), grant from the Educational Reform Program, Southwest University (2017JY038), grant from the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities (SWU1409177).

**Keywords:** academic speaking | classroom academic presentation | EAP teaching | genre analysis | language development

## ABSTRACT

Classroom academic presentation (CAP) has been perceived as an important academic genre integral to college learners' academic success. However, the schematic structure of CAP and learners' acquisition of it remain unclear. In this study, we identified its schematic structure with the method of metagenres and investigated L2 learners' generic progression in employing the genre by examining the generic structures of 39 CAPs delivered by a cohort of Chinese undergraduate learners over a semester. The results show that the learners manifest an unequal development in the CAP generic structure, and they weave the interpersonal meaning inappropriately later into the structure than the ideational one. Our findings offer a reference model for the schematic structure of CAP, help identify obstacles to learning the genre, and have important implications for teaching.

## 1 | Introduction

Classroom academic presentation (CAP), as a way of sharing and reporting disciplinary learning, is almost incumbent upon college students (Nesi and Gardner 2012) and perceived as integral to their academic success. Like other academic genres, CAP also has its distinctive generic structure<sup>1</sup> to both construe our experience of some realm (ideational meaning) and enact the roles and relations in the community (interpersonal meaning). When structuring CAPs, learners should not only formulate ideational meaning they want to say but also ponder how ideational meaning is effectively communicated to the intended audience. The dialogic construction of ideational meaning is fundamental to academic discourse.

Despite its high importance in tertiary education, little research has been conducted on CAP generic structure and

learners' practices. In fact, research on academic discourse over the last 40 years has focused on written academic genres, research papers in particular (Hyland and Jiang 2021; Jiang 2022), leaving academic speech genres, including CAP, under-researched. Moreover, there is a scarcity of research-informed pedagogical materials available to develop this generic competence (Mak 2019). Teachers and learners often resort to intuition when using it. The difficulties of conveying the ideational and interpersonal meanings by means of oral presentations are often magnified for second language (L2) speakers, for they have to cope with the added dimensions of insufficient knowledge of the linguistic expectations and norms of the discourse community (Januin and Stephen 2015; Mak 2019). Given these academic and pedagogical insufficiencies, it is imperative to explore the generic structure of CAP and L2 learners' progression of acquiring such an essential academic genre. The knowledge of CAP generic structure and

of the learners' progression can help English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaching to locate barriers to learning the generic structure and scaffold learners to orally present their disciplinary learning.

As part of an ongoing mixed-methods study that aims to investigate the progression of undergraduates' EAP oral output in the Chinese context, the study at this stage focuses on the following question:

- What developmental characteristics can be found among Chinese undergraduates in learning the generic structure of CAP?

Given the limited availability of research on the generic structure of CAP and varied ways of perceiving and analyzing genres, the study first reviews extant research on genre and genre analysis methods to identify an analytical approach to the generic structure of CAP. Based on the review, it then establishes a CAP generic structure with the method of meta-genres. Using the structure as an analytical framework, it scrutinizes the learners' generic development of CAP. Next, we present the findings and discuss their implications for EAP pedagogy.

## 2 | Literature Review on Genre and Genre Analysis Method

### 2.1 | Genre

Three main perspectives on genre are identified by Hyon (1996): (1) the New Rhetoric approach views genre as motivated, functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation (Coe 2002); (2) the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach, for example represented in the work of Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993), regards genre as a class of communicative events held by a discourse community whose members share some set of communicative purposes (Swales 1990); (3) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), what Hyon refers to as the "Sydney School," sees genre as "staged, goal-oriented, social processes" (Rose and Martin 2012, 1). Though these three main perspectives phrase genre in varied ways, communicative purpose is embedded as a fundamental and distinctive property of genre and is viewed as a privileged criterion for deciding on the types of genre as well as genre family.

While the three main perspectives on genre subscribe to the purposive view of genre, they clearly differ in the emphasis of text and pedagogical approaches. The New Rhetoric approach is more interested in social activity than language as a system itself, and its direct contribution to language pedagogy is minor. The ESP and the SFL genre studies are more text-oriented and have been engaged with issues of L2 teaching. While these two approaches are compatible on many levels, there are some subtle but important differences. The ESP approach of genre studies relies on the intuition of readers or corpus-based searches to generalize categories of genre as well as generic structure. These strategies could be problematic from the perspective of language as systems of meaning. They do not address "the question of the meaning potential of

linguistic choices and how they realize the social purpose of the genre or the stages or moves within." (Hood 2010, 10) and the analysis can be difficult to maintain consistency. While the move structures of some genres, like research article introductions proposed by Swales (1990), is widely used in EAP instruction, the lack of an underlying functional explanation of language choices can limit its potential to expound generic patterns and their variations. This means the generic patterns and variations can only be listed as templates and systems of rules rather than resources for meanings emphasized by the SFL perspective. Furthermore, the division and labeling of generic stages in a text reflect a preference for ideational meaning (construing experience) over interpersonal (enacting interpersonal relations) and textual meanings (building up sequences of discourse), all of which are intrinsic to language, fundamentally believed by the SFL approach, and are known as the three metafunctions of language. Hence, among the three perspectives, the SFL genre studies provide the most theoretically and pedagogically developed approach.

Given the strengths of the SFL perspective and the pedagogical needs of the study, we draw on the SFL perspective to explore learners' CAPs. According to the SFL genre theory, the structure of a genre includes obligatory elements and optional elements (Rose and Martin 2012; Wang 2019). The constitution of obligatory elements is the schematic structure of a genre, representing context of culture, and the inclusion of optional elements shows variations of the genre, representing context of situation, which is further realized at the different strata of language, such as lexicogrammar, phonology, and phonetics (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). Therefore, a genre defines the schematic structure of a specific discourse of the genre, and a specific discourse instantiates the genre it belongs to. A discourse simultaneously embodies ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. The absence of obligatory elements in a discourse of a genre impairs the quality of the discourse.

Through such a lens of SFL genre theory, we analyze the learners' constitution of obligatory elements in the CAPs and their practices of meaning-making at the generic stratum.

### 2.2 | Genre Analysis Method

The communicative purposes of a genre are realized in a process with several stages or moves<sup>2</sup> within (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993; Rose and Martin 2012; Hyland 2014). Each stage and phase of a genre has a specialized function that contributes to the communicative purpose of the genre as a whole (Swales 1990; Rose and Martin 2012; Hyland and Shaw 2016). An aim of genre analysis is to identify the components of a genre and genre families.

Among the various methods used to analyze genres and their stages, Shaw (2016) identified four major methods based on the proposal by Bhatia (2004): metagenres and background reading, a corpus of texts, interviews, and observation. Metagenres and background reading, simplified as metagenres, conduct the analysis by reading extant research on related genres as

well as descriptions of the discourse community that employs the genres. The corpus analysis of texts is to have a statistically representative or typical sample of texts in the target genre from a target domain and identify its repeated stages and phases. Alternatives to text analysis are informant interviews and observation, particularly when genre systems are the focus. Observation provides primary generic information by observing the language practices of the discourse community. Interviews and discussions with informants, especially experts, deepen the text examination in terms of genre repertoire and nuanced generic structure. Both observations and interviews can be used independently and jointly with text analysis.

Given the paucity of research on the generic structure of CAP and the unavailability of CAP exemplars, this study resorts to the method of metagenres, reading previous research on the related genres, to sketch the schematic structure of CAP.

### 3 | Our Analytical Framework: The Schematic Structure of CAP

Though any text, oral or written, has multiple communicative purposes, it is its central purpose that shapes its staging and the genre family it belongs to (Swales 1990; Rose and Martin 2012). CAP, as an academic speech genre, is to provide information about a subject topic while engaging the audience's reasoning and judgments for evaluation. In this sense, CAP shares a primary purpose of informing as well as evaluating with such academic speech genres as lectures, conference presentations, and Three-Minute Thesis presentations (3MT), and the three genres can be perceived as older siblings of CAP. Hence, according to the genre analysis method of metagenres (Shaw 2016), analyzing the common staging of the three academic speech genres can reveal the schematic structure of CAP.

Among the cognate academic speech genres, lectures are perhaps the most familiar academic speech genre to the learners and receive earlier research attention. The generic analysis of this genre focuses on its introduction and conclusion. Thompson (1994) analyzed 18 lecture introductions across disciplines and identified two distinct stages in the lecture introductions: *Setting up the lecture framework* and *Putting the topic into context*, each of which includes several optional phases, such as *announcing the topic*, *presenting aims*, *outlining structure*, *referring to earlier lectures*, *relating "new" to "given,"* *showing importance/relevance of topic*. Lee (2009) examined the lecture introductions from the MICASE corpus (The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) and identified three emerging stages of the lecture introductions, adding a stage of *Warming up* to the two stages identified by Thompson (1994). In this stage, lecturers warm up the audience prior to the actual lecture, providing them with general course information and course-related asides. As for the conclusion, Cheng (2012) analyzed 56 closings of lectures and divided the lecture closings into three stages, namely the *Pre-ending stage*, *Ending stage*, and *Post-ending stage*. Among the three stages of closing the lectures, *Ending stage* (at which the lecturer uses explicit ending expressions to signal the end of the lecture) is of the highest occurrence.

Conference presentations, as another cognate academic speech genre, are often implicitly perceived as an advanced form and educational model of CAPs among the teachers and the novice presenters and thus deserve attention here. Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005) conducted genre analysis of the introductions of 44 conference presentations from three hard disciplines by native English speakers and identified a three-stage structure of the introduction: *Setting up the framework*, *Contextualizing the topic*, and *Stating the research rationale*. Stage one: *Setting up the framework* serves a function of preparing the audience for the coming content of the presentation. At stage two, *Contextualizing the topic*, presenters start to address the content of the presentations by providing the background information of the topic. Stage three of the introduction *Stating the research rationale* mainly concerns the research motivations and the research goals. As for the rest of the sections of conference presentations, little research on their generic structure is available.

3MT, as a relatively young academic speech genre founded by the University of Queensland in 2008 and gaining popularity among universities worldwide, challenges graduate students to report their thesis in just 3 min to a disciplinarily heterogeneous audience. Its format also inspires the oral presentations at the undergraduate level. Among the studies on 3MT generic structure, Hu and Liu (2018) and Boldt (2019) proffered a thorough sequence. Hu and Liu (2018), by analyzing a corpus of 142 3MT presentations by PhD students from four disciplines, identified eight distinct stages in the presentations, including six obligatory stages (*Orientation*, *Rationale*, *Purpose*, *Methods*, *Implication*, and *Termination*) and two optional ones (*Framework* and *Results*). Boldt (2019), by analyzing a corpus of more than 110 winning 3MTs, identified six stages (*The hook*, *What we know*, *What we do not know*, *What to do about it*, *What we did and what we found*, *Why the research matters*) in a problem-solution format. Though the stages of 3MT identified by Boldt appear to be markedly different from those by Hu and Liu, the functionality of each stage in essence bears a close resemblance to each other (see Table 1). The function of *Orientation* labeled by Hu and Liu is identical to *The hook*, *What we know* and *What we do not know* by Boldt. *Rationale* and *Purpose* as well as *Framework* by Hu and Liu is similar to *What to do about it* by Boldt. *Methods* and *Results* by Hu and Liu resemble *What we did and what we found* by Boldt. *Implication* by Hu and Liu is a counterpart of *Why the research matters* by Boldt. While *Termination* is not listed by Boldt as an independent stage, the examples of 3MT examined by her do manifest the ending of 3MTs by thanking the audience. Hence, the two versions of the stages in 3MT are essentially the same in their functions.

The similarities across the three academic speech genres, namely lectures, conference presentations, and 3MT, are also seen in their schematic structures and functions. At the stage of introduction, these three academic speech genres start with attention getters and topic introductions to signal the beginning of the presentation and prepare the audience for the ensuing content. The body section is to elaborate on the topic introduced, using varied elaboration strategies, among which presenting the main points with supporting examples and/or data is of high

**TABLE 1** | Generic components of 3MT.

<b>Hu and Liu (2018)</b>	<b>Boldt (2019)</b>	<b>Communicative functions</b>
Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listener orientation</li> <li>• Content orientation</li> </ul>	The hook What we know What we do not know	To attract the audience's attention and orient them to the content
Rationale Purpose Framework (optional)	What to do about it	To give conceptual details on the current research
Methods Results (optional)	What we did and what we found	To give methodological and resultant details on the current research
Implication Termination	Why the research matters	To demonstrate the value of the current research and provide psychological closure

**TABLE 2** | The schematic structure of CAP.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Sub-phase</b>
Introduction	Listener orientation	Greeting the audience (abbreviated as GA)
	Content orientation	Introducing the topic (TP) Describing the gap between what the audience know and what they do not know about the topic (BA)
Body	Content development/ elaboration	Presenting important point(s) (IP) Providing supporting materials and/or data (SM)
Conclusion	Concluding messages	Summarizing key points (SKP) Providing 'take-away' messages (TAM) Expressing gratitude and/or inviting questions from the audience (GTD)

occurrence. The stage of conclusion also reveals certain similarities among the three genres: highlighting the key points of what has been presented, providing take-away messages, and giving expression to gratitude for the audience.

The shared obligatory elements of the three academic speech genres can work as those of CAP, and thus we establish a schematic structure of the genre (see Table 2).

The introduction of CAP functions as listener orientation and content orientation. The former signals the beginning of a presentation and attracts the audience's attention. The latter introduces the topic of the presentation and provides background information. The body section presents important materials/data to dive deeper into the topic. The conclusion section gives a summary of the main points and provides final "takeaway" messages (implications) before closing with gratitude. The generic structure (textual meaning) weaves ideational and interpersonal meanings into the genre, and they jointly achieve the communicative goal of CAP.

In this paper we will use the schematic structure shown in Table 2 as our analytical framework to examine the learners' structuring CAPs.

## 4 | Methods

### 4.1 | Participants

Our participants were 55 first-year, multi-disciplinary undergraduates enrolled in a 16-week EAP course on listening, note-taking, and speaking at a Chinese university. The students majored in social science ( $n=21$ ) and varied natural science and engineering ( $n=34$ ). Based on their performance on the University Placement Test in the first semester, the students were placed at a lower intermediate level of English proficiency.

### 4.2 | Data Collection

Two sources of data were collected for the present study: (1) the learners' CAPs as the main data to examine their structuring practices and (2) their reflections on the performance as a supplement to gain the learners' self-reported perceptions of their practices.

In the course, the learners formed 13 groups voluntarily, with three or five members per group. The course assigned three 5-min oral presentation tasks during the semester. The first



two presentation tasks, assigned at early and middle semester, were on textbook topics concerning psychoneuroimmunology and cardiovascular disease, respectively. For these two presentation tasks, all 13 groups listened, read, and discussed a set of topic-related EAP materials and decided on their stances and supporting materials. They jointly drafted each presentation and selected their representatives to deliver it. After each of the first two presentation tasks, they together completed a reflective form on the group practices, which focused on three aspects, namely strengths, weaknesses, and actions to improve. The third presentation task assigned as a final oral examination was prepared individually on the disciplinary topics proposed by the learners themselves. Before the first task, the instructor (one of the researchers) explained the schematic structure of CAP and the communicative goals of the stages along with other aspects listed in a rubric and illustrated those in guiding the learners in analyzing the textual structure of one textbook lecture. The CAP rubric (see [Appendix](#)) was made readily available to the learners throughout the semester.

The learners were required to present from memory for all the presentations. All the presentations were audio-recorded and transcribed. Among all the third presentations, one from each group was randomly chosen for the analysis. Thus, over the semester, we collected 39 presentations (one from each of the 13 groups for three presentation tasks, respectively) and 26 reflective forms (one from each of the 13 groups for the first two presentation tasks, respectively).

The pedagogical intervention on learning the generic structure is of limited implicit instruction, primarily in the forms of a rubric, learner reflection, and analysis guidance on the textual structure of one textbook lecture as described above. By doing so, we can identify the hindrance to learning the genre and accordingly design the explicit instruction.

### 4.3 | Data Analysis

Drawn on the schematic structure of CAP (see [Table 2](#)) identified with the metagenres method, the structures of the learners' presentations were manually coded according to their functions, for instance, as TP introducing the topic. All the 39 presentations were coded together. At the inception of coding, two presentations were randomly selected for a pilot coding to familiarize the schematic structure and textual boundary indicators. Then all the presentations were structurally labeled by the two researchers independently before they checked the agreement of their coding. The analysis discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Subsequently, the presence/absence of each structural element in a presentation was statistically represented as 1/0 in a table. By comparing those numbers, we were able to scrutinize cross-sectionally the generic feature of each learner CAP and longitudinally the changes in the schematic structure of the learner CAPs across the semester.

The learners' reflections were analyzed to spot comments on the structuring practices. When doing the reflections, the learners were encouraged to consult the rubric, in which four out of ten items illustrate the structural expectations, for instance,

"develops a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and provides psychological closure". Out of the reflections, the structure-relevant comments were extracted. Those comments were then thematically recorded and analyzed by introduction-body-conclusion stages. For example, a comment of "no summary at the end" in the reflection of the first CAP was recorded under the heading of 1st CAP conclusion; the similar comments on the same structural element of the same CAP task were recorded and also calculated by number to indicate the frequency. This set of self-reported reflective data by the learners reveals their awareness of the generic structure, providing a supplementary source and angle for examining their progression in learning to present.

## 5 | Findings

The analysis showed two principal patterns of structuring CAPs by the learners: saying (focusing on the message they say) and communicating (dialogically constructing and transmitting the message to the intended audience). They progressed from merely saying early in the semester to communicating with their audience later by adding necessary structural elements to guide the audience through the CAPs.

### 5.1 | First Presentation: Saying CAPs

Early in the semester, the absence of some obligatory elements in both the introductions and the conclusions of the CAPs was a dominant feature across the 13 presentations, providing insufficient orientation and few concluding messages (see [Table 3](#)). The presentations concerned more the ideas they were to impart, neglecting their audience's cognitive load (mental effort required to process information and create connections).

In the extract below, a student from Group 3 started the presentation by saying:

First of all, I want to make my point. I think pressure is a double-edged sword. Proper pressure will make people more energetic. On the contrary, excessive pressure will bring people physical and psychological harm.

(Introduction by G3, Week 4)

The beginning by Group 3 manifested a common feature across the first CAPs, that is, building no rapport with the audience. They did not verbally signal the beginning of the presentation or connect with the audience. Nor did they provide background information on the topic or describe the knowledge gap.

In the body section, the learners elaborated on the content by presenting important points and relevant supporting materials. However, they often concluded abruptly without reiterating the key points or telling a final take-away message. The conclusion extract from Group 6 marked the end of the presentation by using the conclusive expression "*That's all*" along with "*Thank you,*" but with a hollow message:

**TABLE 3** | The generic structure of the learners' CAPs in Week 4.<sup>a</sup>

	Introduction			Body		Conclusion		
	GA	TP	BA	IP	SM	SKP	TAM	GTD
G1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
G2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
G3	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
G4	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
G5	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
G6	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
G7	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
G8	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
G9	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
G10	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
G11	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
G12	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
G13	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Total	6	12	7	13	13	6	3	10

Note: The number “1” means the presence of a designated generic element while “0” indicates the absence of it.  
<sup>a</sup>The full expressions of the abbreviations of the generic elements in Tables 3–5 can be found in Table 2.

Finally, I hope we can cope with pressure better.  
That’s all! Thank you.

(Conclusion by G6, Week 4)

In reflecting upon their first CAP practices, only one out of thirteen groups described the insufficiency in their introduction and conclusion, saying, “no proper introduction at the beginning” and “no summary at the end”. This indicates that the majority were unaware of the deficiency.

The learners’ CAPs, together with their reflections, show their general understanding of Introduction and Conclusion: Introduction equals to naming the topic, and Conclusion to uttering ending expressions such as “*that’s all*,” “*thank you*”. The learners tended to leave the cognitive load of the audience unattended in the start and the end of the earlier CAPs.

**5.2 | Second Presentation: Emerging Sense of the Audience in CAPs**

Toward the mid-semester, their sense of the audience emerged, warming up the audience for the foregoing contents in the introductions and enhancing the audience’s sense of gains with take-away messages and/or a summary of key points in the conclusions (see Table 4).

While the absence of background information in the introduction was still seen in the second CAPs, the introductions

**TABLE 4** | The generic structure of the learners' CAPs in Week 8.

	Introduction			Body		Conclusion		
	GA	TP	BA	IP	SM	SKP	TAM	GTD
G1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
G2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
G3	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
G4	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
G5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
G6	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
G7	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
G8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
G9	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
G10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G11	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
G12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G13	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Total	10	13	10	13	13	5	8	10

Note: The number “1” means the presence of a designated generic element while “0” indicates the absence of it.

**TABLE 5** | The generic structure of the learners' CAPs in Week 16.

	Introduction			Body		Conclusion		
	GA	TP	BA	IP	SM	SKP	TAM	GTD
G1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
G3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G6	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
G7	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
G8	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
G9	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
G10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G11	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
G12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G13	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
Total	13	13	12	13	13	7	8	13

Note: The number “1” means the presence of a designated generic element while “0” indicates the absence of it.

manifested an increase in the inclusion of background information as well as listener orientation. The following extract illustrated this shared developmental change:

Hi everybody. According to what we heard in the chapter, we know that blood sugar is one of some risk factors in CVD, and it is alterable. Today, what I focus on is blood sugar.

(Introduction by G5, Week 8)

While the structure of the body section remained relatively stable, the developmental change also occurred in that of the conclusions, providing real concluding messages. Unlike the abrupt and empty ending in the first CAPs, the conclusions of the second CAPs displayed the summary of the key points, the presence of final take-away messages, and/or the gratitude to the audience, as illustrated in the following extract below:

Stick to a healthy diet, keep moving. As long as you are alive. You'll decrease your chances of getting CVD and other diseases. Thank you.

(Conclusion by G12, Week 8)

In the learners' reflections, two accentuated the further modification of the Introduction and Conclusion, such as "adding background information" and "summarizing the points" to increase the gains of the audience.

The learners' CAPs and reflections reveal their growing awareness of their leading roles in making the ideational meaning heard.

### 5.3 | Third Presentation: Communicating CAPs

Later in the semester, the third CAPs continued to witness a modest increase in creating rapport with the audience, fulfilling the communicative functions of both Introduction and Conclusion of the CAPs (see Table 5).

In providing content orientation, a tendency to address the knowledge gap emerged. The learners outlined what the audience knows and what they do not know to depict a knowledge gap, and on such a basis, they presented the aims/focuses of their CAPs. In the conclusions, the CAPs presented a review of key points and final take-away messages before expressing the gratitude and inviting questions. The following extracts illustrated these developmental changes across the groups:

Hello, everyone. Internet of Things: you have probably heard this a lot in your daily life, but you may not know exactly what it means, how it comes into being, and how we use it. My speech today is about it.

(Introduction by G3, Week 16)

The Internet of Things, keeping everything interconnected, will improve our lives in a wider field. But the Internet is a double-edged sword, and the Internet of Things will also have its problems, such as energy consumption, and pollution. The most important problem is privacy and security issues. Therefore, while enjoying the convenience brought by

the Internet of Things, we should also pay attention to protecting our privacy. Thank you for listening.

(Conclusion by G3, Week 16)

## 5.4 | Overall Changes

Across all the learners' CAPs during the semester, the introductions and the conclusions became gradually better structured/functioned while the bodies remained fairly structured (see Table 6). The introductions and the conclusions, which encompassed all obligatory elements in each stage, were on the rise, boosting the realization of its communicative goals and enhancing the quality of the stages and of the CAPs as a whole.

The change demonstrated an important incremental progress in the learners' generic awareness and skills to achieve communicative purposes, manifesting a move from what they wanted to say (focusing primarily on ideational meaning) to what they wanted the audience to gain (weaving interpersonal meaning into ideational meaning). At the generic level, the learners gradually integrated ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings together in their CAPs (see Figure 1).

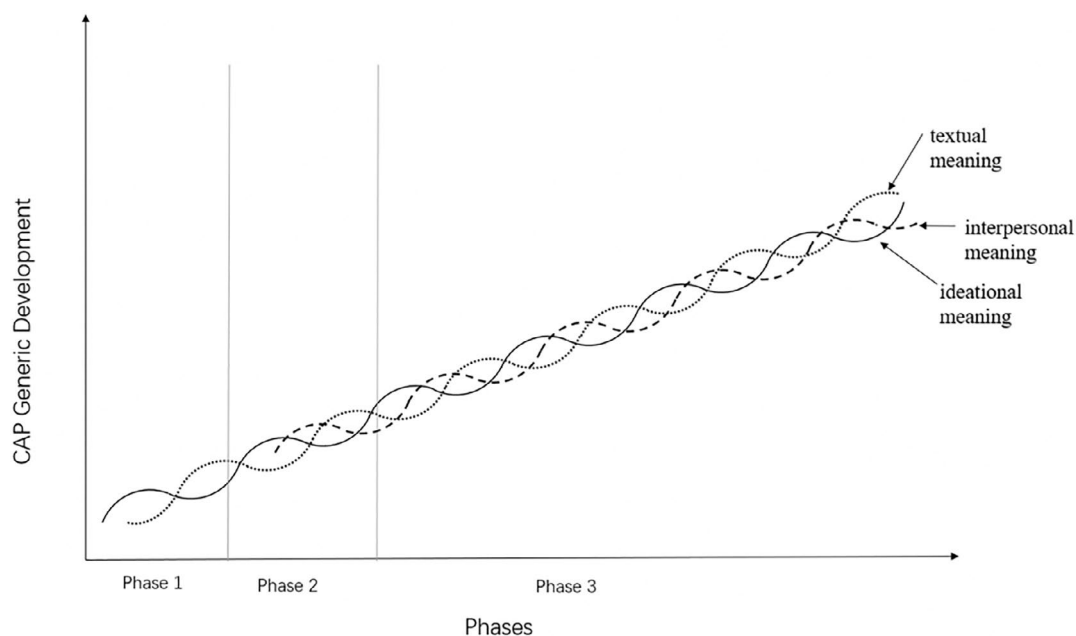
Moreover, while the body sections of the CAPs retained the obligatory elements, the later body sections showed some variations in the structures, such as the emerging patterns of "defining a key term → categorizing the objects → analyzing their relationships → presenting a solution," or "problematizing a phenomenon → presenting the stance → presenting evidence → reiterating the stance → presenting a solution".

## 6 | Discussion and Conclusion

Using the schematic structure of CAP by the metagenres method and drawing on the SFL perspective, the study examined the CAP structuring practices of a Chinese first-year undergraduate cohort over a semester. Initially, the learners tended to deliver the presentations partially devoid of orientation at the outset and of concluding messages at the end, being too preoccupied with the ideas they were to say to consider the cognitive load of their audience. As their awareness of the audience and of CAP generic structure developed, some groups started to enrich the introductions and the conclusions, providing the audience with necessary content orientation at the beginning and meaningful concluding messages at the end. At the end of the semester, they continued to weave ideational and interpersonal functions together in the CAPs, fulfilling the communicative functions of the two stages. While the two stages witnessed a gradual progress, the body stage remained

**TABLE 6** | Frequency of the learners' CAP generic structure (N = 13).

	Introduction	Body	Conclusion
Week 4	4	13	0
Week 8	8	13	2
Week 16	12	13	6



**FIGURE 1** | Phase of the generic development of the learners CAPs.

fairly structured in terms of obligatory elements and later showed some variations in content development, diversifying its pattern.

The constancy of the body stage and the flaws in the introduction and conclusion stages in terms of obligatory elements may attribute to a conceptual transfer (Jarvis 2010) from the generic structure of written academic genres. Out of the frequent training in written informing genres in their mother tongue, the learners would consciously and subconsciously use L1 resources to perform in the L2 (Ellis 2015). The influence is a positive one on the composition of the body stage but can be negative on that of the introduction and conclusion stages, for the learners may not be fully aware of the variations in generic structures of those two stages between the written genres and the speech genres. The academic speech genres embody more elements conveying interpersonal meaning than the academic written genres in the introduction and the conclusion stages, to appeal to the immediate audience (Boldt 2019; Hu and Liu 2018; Lee 2009) and help them sort out the ideational meaning.

While the body stage maintains the obligatory elements, the variations in it can be perceived as the emergence of individuation (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014), extending from obligatory (collective) to individual. In this process, the learners are accumulating alternative patterns of elaboration associated with academic contexts of use and thus expanding their repertoire of resources to present.

The positive alterations in the introductions and the conclusions indicate that the learners increasingly used an audience-inclusive approach by weighing the audience's knowledge background and memory span as well as gains from the CAPs. The presence of all the obligatory elements of the genre in an expected sequence can raise not only the quality of the specific discourse of the genre (Rose and Martin 2012; Wang 2019) but also the comprehension and even acceptance of the ideational meaning by the audience's part.

However, the results also showed two major disparities in the learners' generic development of CAPs. One is in the integration of the three meanings in the CAPs. The interpersonal meaning developed much later than the ideational and textual meanings in this genre, and some of the learners still did not manage to incorporate it into the genre at the end of the semester. The unevenness suggests that the interpersonal meaning of the academic speech genre at the generic stratum can present a challenge for the novices, as it does at the other strata of language in other written and spoken academic genres (e.g., Hood 2010; Hyland and Zou 2021; Loghmani, Ghonsooly, and Ghazanfari 2020). While challenges of presenting abstract and professional knowledge are acknowledged and catered for in learning, challenges of how we position ourselves in interaction with the knowledge and with the audience or readers in presenting academic knowledge at the varied strata of language are often less overtly addressed. Such imbalance in pedagogical design of learning can hinder the acquisition of academic genres as well as the popularization of academic knowledge.

Another obvious disparity is seen between the development of the generic structure of the CAP introduction and that of the conclusion. The learners seemed to grasp the generic structure of CAP introduction better and faster than they did that of conclusion. While most learners gradually presented effective introductions in guiding and engaging the audience as well as positioning themselves as the presenters, some of them continued to conclude the CAPs ineffectively. Less efficient time management and linguistic competence may contribute to the insubstantial conclusions as well as the disparity in the development. Culture may also be a hidden but fundamental factor. In writing instruction across the varied levels of education in China, the saying "Well begun is half done" is accentuated, contributing to the unintended favor of the introductions over the conclusions. Moreover, the Chinese are educated to be modest rather than assertive. Consequently, the Chinese learners form an ingrained habit of not wishing to assert themselves in making a summary and proffering takeaway



messages or evaluative comments in presentations. Such a trait is also identified by Guest (2018), stating that a sense of performance modesty is prevalent among many Asian presenters. They are less ready to add an air of certainty to the conclusions, whether in their mother tongue or in English, creating a negligible closing impact on the audience.

Our findings contribute to the knowledge of the generic structure of the prototypical learner genre CAP. The generic structure of CAP we proposed by the metagenres method identifies CAP obligatory elements in sequence and captures the intertwinement of the three meanings of CAP, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings at the generic level. It allows researchers and instructors to observe learners' presentations and guide their progression in learning to present.

The findings also identify the obstacles to learning the genre and reveal the aspects on which explicit instruction is to be given. In learning to do CAPs, learners need guidance not only for the academic knowledge but also for how they position themselves in interaction with knowledge and with the audience. How the academics enact interpersonal relations with the audience and with the knowledge while presenting the content in a field needs to be explicitly addressed for the novices. Learners also need guidance for the schematic structure of CAP as a whole and for the generic codes of its individual stages.

Some teaching strategies are proposed as follows. Firstly, learners' awareness of the communicative functions of the genre can be sharpened with scaffolded sample analysis of the individual stages and of the whole genre. In the selection of samples for analysis, both well-developed and ill-developed learner CAPs can be used to evaluate the structural effects on the quality of the genre. The cognate genres of CAPs, such as 3MT, can also be used as examples for the analysis if no CAP exemplar is available. The analysis can be conducted in the form of teacher-to-student work, student pair work, or group work, integrating expository learning with observation and discovery learning. In addition to learning the schematic structure, instructors can guide learners to broaden their repertoire of the linguistic resources and strategies for each stage. Secondly, teacher modeling and group drafting of the stages of CAPs could be another scaffold for transferring the propositional knowledge (knowing what) of the CAP genre to the procedural knowledge (knowing how). Thirdly, the guided reflection on each CAP practice also helps develop learners' competence in presenting. Such scaffolded, hands-on, and reflective tasks contribute to more productive learning. In general, scaffolding the meaning-making process of using the genre, especially making sense of the generic elements, broadening linguistic and strategic resources, and articulating the thoughts, and reflecting on the practices, can make the educational tasks more achievable and more productive for learning the genre.

In future study, our plan is to enrich the data collected (e.g., learners' reasoning of facilitative/ hindering factors for the realization of the functions) and to extend our exploration to the issues such as how learners organize the discursive flow and create cohesion and continuity of CAPs to guide the audience to the intended messages and how the capability may facilitate the development of other constructs of academic literacies like writing.

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## Acknowledgments

The authors thank the editors and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments.

## Ethics Statement

Our research adheres to ethical and legal standards for work with human subjects.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Generic structure, also known as rhetorical structure, is the text organization of a certain type of discourse, presenting the staged realization of its communicative goals.

<sup>2</sup> While the ESP approach uses "move" and "step", e.g., Swales (1990), to name the generic pattern, the SFL approach employs "stage" and "phase" (Rose and Martin 2012) to do so. This study draws on the SFL perspective and therefore adopts the latter terms for the generic components or elements.

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## Appendix

### Rubric of Classroom Academic Presentation

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Scorer: \_\_\_\_\_

Items	Scores				
(1) Selects a topic interpreted with discipline-specific lens appropriate to the audience	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Formulates an introduction that orients audience to the topic and the speaker	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Uses an effective organizational pattern	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Integrates convincing evidence for the thesis with sound reasoning	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Develops a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and provides psychological closure	1	2	3	4	5

Items	Scores				
(6) Demonstrates a careful choice of words (terms, bias, hedge, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
(7) Effectively uses vocal expression and paralanguage to engage the audience	1	2	3	4	5
(8) Demonstrates nonverbal behavior that supports the verbal message	1	2	3	4	5
(9) Successfully adapts the presentation to the audience and occasion	1	2	3	4	5
(10) Skillfully makes use of visual aids	1	2	3	4	5
Total scores					

## TESOL Journal (TJ)

### Bibliographic information

International title:	TESOL Journal (TJ)	
p-ISSN:	1056-7941	Period: [1991 .. 2003]
e-ISSN:	1949-3533	Period: [1991 .. ]
Language:	English	
Country of publication:	United States	
URL:	<a href="https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/19493533">https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/19493533</a>	
Publishing house:	John Wiley & Sons	
Publisher:	Wiley	

### Evaluation

Approved 2021-01-22	ERIH PLUS criteria for inclusion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scientific editorial board	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peer reviewed	
ERIH PLUS disciplines: Linguistics	
OECD classifications: Languages and Literature	

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报告编号: L24K2025-1351



# 检索报告

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- 1. 委托人: 马俊明 (Ma J.)
- 2. 委托单位: 西南大学
- 3. 检索目的: 论文被 SCOPUS 收录情况

## 二、检索范围

SCOPUS ( <a href="https://www.scopus.com/">https://www.scopus.com/</a> )	1960-present	网络版
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委托人提供的1篇论文被SCOPUS收录, 论文收录情况见附件一。

特此证明!

检索报告人: 孙雪

东北师范大学科技查新咨询中心

教育部科技查新工作站(L24)

2025 年 6 月 16 日



**附件一： SCOPUS收录情况**

Scopus

导出日期: 16 June 2025

**Ma J., Liu C.**AUTHOR FULL NAMES: Ma, Junming (59374577500); Liu, Chengyu (57203861454)  
59374577500; 57203861454From Saying to Communicating: The Generic Development of Classroom Academic Presentations  
by Chinese First-Year College Students

(2025) TESOL Journal, 16 (1), art. no. e70010, Cited 0 times.

DOI: 10.1002/tesj.70010

[https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85216622053&doi=10.1002%2ftesj.70010  
&partnerID=40&md5=8a26ba8b116af5df81bf34407857711b](https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85216622053&doi=10.1002%2ftesj.70010&partnerID=40&md5=8a26ba8b116af5df81bf34407857711b)

归属机构: Southwest University, Chongqing, China

摘要: Classroom academic presentation (CAP) has been perceived as an important academic genre integral to college learners' academic success. However, the schematic structure of CAP and learners' acquisition of it remain unclear. In this study, we identified its schematic structure with the method of metagenres and investigated L2 learners' generic progression in employing the genre by examining the generic structures of 39 CAPs delivered by a cohort of Chinese undergraduate learners over a semester. The results show that the learners manifest an unequal development in the CAP generic structure, and they weave the interpersonal meaning inappropriately later into the structure than the ideational one. Our findings offer a reference model for the schematic structure of CAP, help identify obstacles to learning the genre, and have important implications for teaching. © 2025 TESOL International Association.

作者关键字: academic speaking; classroom academic presentation; EAP teaching; genre analysis; language development

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出版商: John Wiley and Sons Inc

ISSN: 10567941

原始文献语言: English

来源出版物名称缩写: TESOL J.

文献类型: Article

出版阶段: Final

来源出版物: Scopus



—The End—