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Generic Structure of Descriptive Text Written English Language Learner and Teachers

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Abstract--The objective of this research is to describe the appropriateness and inappropriateness of participants in formulating identification in descriptive text. The researcher applies the theory of Gerot and Wignel (1994) from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. To achieve the aim of this research, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative research design. The participants of this research come from three different groups (students at junior high school, English department students, and English teachers). It was chosen since the whole group is familiar with this kind of genre. Since the pandemic situation, the researcher used WhatsUp as a supporting instrument to collect the data. After analyzing the data (interactive data analysis) through the implementation of the systemic functional linguistics perspective, the researcher got the result. This research shows that 50% of junior high school students categorized appropriately in writing identification, 20% of English department students categorized appropriately, and 60% of English teachers categorized appropriately. Based on the results above, it can be concluded that the participants have a poor ability to write identification. It suggests that the English teachers' training program and English teachers have a better pedagogical plan and knowledge of the genre before teaching descriptive text.

Keywords--descriptive text, English language, generic structure, identification, teachers.

Introduction

Language is a tool to express our ideas about something. All languages have four skills, speaking, reading, listening, and writing. (Ismayanti & Kholid, 2020), state that the main purpose of language is to express ideas in spoken or even written language. Writing and speaking are productive skills, and the rest is receptive skill. Writing and speaking are basic skills to foster students' education (Cer, 2019). Through speaking and writing, can persuade others. Writing can be categorized as success through some stages. There are some stages in writing, like 1). drafting, writing, editing, proofreading, revising, and publishing 2) composing, communicating, crafting, improving, evaluating, 3) pre-writing, writing, re-writing. Writers should experience these steps to achieve better writing. Writing activities help the writer to develop and regulate awareness of linguistics and cognitive levels for writing, according to Cer (2019).

In addition to that, (Barreto, 2011), describes four approaches to teaching writing, a) focus on accuracy, b) focus on fluency, c) focus on the text, and d) focus on purpose. The first approach (accuracy) can be achieved by allowing the learners to write what they prefer without guidance. A fluency approach can be done with freewriting, making the students feel as though they are having fun without bearing the brunt of mistakes. The third approach is focused on the organization involved to cover the central issue in writing. Finally, focus on purpose to indicate there is a reason to write. This approach is used to write text genres.

Writing itself has fourteen genres. These are narrative, descriptive, recount, explanatory, recounts, spoofs, argumentation, reports, news items, anecdotes, procedure, hortatory, discussion, and reviews (Gerot & Wignel, 1994). These genres have a clear difference. This difference serves to indicate the uniqueness of the overall text on purpose (Durrant & Brenchley, 2019). (Sumekto, 2017), states that genre is considered as a simple term and is used to identify different types of written text. Every genre has its own characteristics in formulation, like social function, generic structure, and lexicogrammatical features. If the writer's purpose is to amuse or entertain the reader, the writer should pay attention to the characteristics of the narrative genre.

The purpose of the descriptive genre and others are different. For example, the purpose of the description genre is to describe a particular thing. However, the purpose of the narrative genre is to amuse, entertain, and deal with problematic events. Besides, the description has a different generic structure from other genres. For example, the generic structure of a description is identification and description. However, the generic structure of a narrative is orientation, evaluation, complication, resolution, and re-orientation (optional). The similarity in constructing the whole genre is that the generic structure must be written in an orderly fashion. It should be done so to achieve well-written text. Similarities can occur at the level of lexicogrammatical features, but differences also occur. For example, both the narrative and the description use specific participant and relational processes, but both of them have a different tense in use. The narrative uses past tense and the description uses present tense. In this case, the narrative uses more various processes (material, behavioral, verbal, and mental processes) than description (Jiang et al., 2020; Brooks et al., 1983; Suryasa et al., 2019).

To learn these genres, we need to employ a genre-based approach to acquire them well. Since 1945, Indonesia has never used a genre-based approach. The details can be seen in the following table:

Table 1
The changes of English curriculum in Indonesia

Year	Curriculum	Approach
1945	Unknown	Grammar translation
1968	Oral approach	Audio lingual
1975	Oral approach	Audio lingual
1984	Communicative approach	Communicative
1994	Meaning-based curriculum	Communicative
2004	Competency based curriculum	Communicative
2006	School-level autonomy curriculum	Communicative
20113	2013 curriculum	Scientific approach

However, other countries like Singapore, South Africa, the USA, Italy, Hong Kong, Australia, the UK, China, Canada, Sweden, and Thailand are adopting genre-based approaches to develop their curriculum, syllabuses, and materials, even the status of English as their native (first), second, and foreign language (Derewianka, 2015).

The Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 104 the Year 2014 in (Torar & Wahono, 2016), promotes learner autonomy and critical thinking as a part of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). HOTS play an important role in connecting to prior knowledge, HOTS is an effective way to solve the problem. (Retnawati et al., 2018), state that HOTS activity (analyzing, evaluating, and creating) is important to help students for solving the new issue. Creating a descriptive text is a part of an authentic assessment to practice HOTS.

However, based on the curriculum which is realized in the English syllabus, only several (common) genres are learned at the level of junior and senior high school. Besides, sub-types descriptive genre (objective description and literary description) are not designed in this pedagogic plan (curriculum and syllabus). It can be reviewed in the 2013 curriculum or syllabus. The curriculum and syllabus instruct to teach seven text genres (without paying attention on genre sub-types). They are recount, procedure, narrative, report, description, explanation, and exposition (Hashemi, 2011; Paradis et al., 2010; Pica, 2000).

There are three considerations in writing a description. They are social function, generic structure, and lexicogrammatical features. The social function of descriptive text is to describe particular people, animals, and other things. The generic structure of a descriptive text is identification and descriptions. Some lexicogrammatical features of description are a) Focus on specific Participants b) Use of Attributive and Identifying Processes c) Frequent use of Epithet and Classifiers in nominal groups d) Use of the simple present tense (Gerot & Wignel, 1994).

Identification as the first generic is the focus of this research. Identification is to identify the phenomenon that needs to describe. Identification is the first clause in descriptive text. In formulating ideal identification in descriptive text, the token (subject or participant) should be specific. The process (verb or predicate) should be relational-identification. This is the core knowledge that the writer of descriptive text must know. If the writer does not care about these characteristics, he/she will produce incorrect identification in the descriptive text even the social function can be achieved (Tessuto, 2015; Hyland, 2004; Zavolzi, 2021).

The description is the second generic structure in descriptive text. To write a description, a writer needs to describe parts, characteristics, and qualities of a particular thing. The participant or subject on the description is called carrier and token. The verb or process on the description is called relational-attributive. The last part is an object called an attribute. The whole of them (carrier and token, relational-attributive and attribute) should be written textually. It means that the writer needs to avoid general participant, avoid using the material, mental and other processes except for relational process. The writer needs to apply the epithet to represent the quality and use a simple present (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2021).

Some formulations should be fulfilled in constructing the description text. It can be seen from the usage of a process. Identification uses relational-identifying processes and description uses the relational-attributive process. Both of them have different characteristics not only in the process but also in the participants' role. The participant of identification is a token, however, the participant of description is a carrier. The examples of identification can be seen below.

Table 2
The examples of identification

Friday	is	the dateline
Token	Relational- identifying	value

The example above is a feature of the first schema structure (identification) on descriptive text. The formulation is token + identifying + value. In addition to that, the example of description is presented below.

Table 3
The example feature of the first schema structure identification

A whale	is	a mammal
Carrier	Relational- Attributive	Attribute

The example above is a feature of the second schema structure (description) on descriptive. The formulation is carrier + attributive + attribute. However, it is difficult to differ relational processes as identifying or attributive based on both examples. To know whether the process is identifying or attributive, It can be tested by reversible and the semantic relationship still holds. The clause of

“Friday is the dateline” and “The dateline is Friday” still keep the same meaning. However, in the clause of “a whale is a mammal” and “a mammal is a whale” does not keep the original meaning.

Both generic structures (identification and description) in the description should be written in an orderly. The researcher believes that most of the participants do not aware of formulating identification in constructing descriptive text. This assumption comes from some points of view. Firstly, based on the curriculum and syllabus which emphasized some common genres in the level of junior and senior high school (Guglielmi et al., 2014; Banu et al., 2021). The curriculum and syllabus are lack attention on sub-genre. Secondly, Since Indonesia Independence day (1945), The curriculum already changed (eight times) but never adopt the genre-based approach in teaching English as a foreign language. Finally, Some surveys on former researchers have already been done by the researcher.

Based on some previous researches (Siahaan, 2013), in her case study for the tenth grader in Bandung, she divides the students into three groups (low, mid, and high achievers) based on their proficiency in writing descriptive. The researcher investigates the ability and difficulties of students to write a descriptive paragraph. The researcher revealed that the low achievers were still weak in identifying the schematic structure of a descriptive text and the rest categorized well.

(Sipayung et al., 2016), made similar research on metafunction on student's descriptive paragraph. Their research focuses on experiential, interpersonal, textual meaning, and schematic structure/generic structure of a descriptive paragraph. To achieve the objectives of the research they used content and interview (descriptive-qualitative design) analysis. The participants in this research are sixty-five students of the English language education department in the fifth semester in Medan. This research described that most of the students (64,7%) construct descriptive text with the incorrect process (like attribution: 52,94% and another process: 11,76%) in writing identification.

(Anggun, 2016), made similar research entitled an analysis of descriptive text in English textbook using transitivity system (a case study of reading passages). Her research focused on social function, schematic structure and language features on textbook namely Buku Sekolah Elektronik (BSE) entitled Bahasa Inggris for senior High School Grade X. It is Published by the Department of Education and culture. It is a compulsory textbook that should be used by senior high schools. She figured out that three of four descriptive texts met the purpose. Three of the four generic structures did not meet the characteristics.

(Noprianto, 2017), also made relevant research entitled Student's descriptive text writing is SFL perspectives. The researcher would like to diagnose the students' problem in writing descriptive text through systemic functional linguistics theory. To get this research intention, qualitative research is employed with purposive sampling, however, the text is written by the female (only) at second grade from private high school. This research state that the major problem for students to write descriptively is the failure of social function. Students' problem to write descriptive text based on its generic structure. The last problem is the usage of an

appropriate language feature. The last similar research was conducted by (Turnip et al., 2019), they are focused on students' ability in writing descriptive text. The participants of this research are students in second grade 14 male and 9 female. To get their objective, the researchers use the qualitative method. This research figures out that 56,51% of students' ability is categorized medium to high. Besides most of the students still had many difficulties in making paragraphs that used the correct generic structure.

Based on several researchers above (Siahaan, 2013; Anggun, 2016; Noprianto, 2017), and (Turnip et al., 2019), most of them are not focused on generic structure however this research will focus on the first generic structure of the descriptive text, identification. This focus will be more comprehensive than previous researchers. In addition to that, the subject of previous researches students at high (junior and senior) schools (Siahaan, 2013; Noprianto, 2017), and (Turnip et al., 2019), English department students (Sipayung et al., 2016), and descriptive textbook (Anggun, 2016). Based on their research subject or participant, this research made a larger amount of participants from the former. The participants of this research were a representation of the junior high school, English teacher training and English teacher (professional).

Based on the background above, the researcher would like to describe the appropriateness of participants in writing identification. The theory of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday et al., 2014), and its realization on genre-based (Gerot & Wignel, 1994), are used to analyze the data. Both theories can categorize whether identification is appropriate or inappropriate. The result of this research will give some significances (theoretically and practically). Theoretically, this finding will give the current issue related to the descriptive genre. The result will describe various participants' abilities in formulating identification. It is a signal for the next researcher to make research on the second part on generic structure (description) with various participants.

Practically, this finding will give some contributions or significances on English teachers, English teacher training, junior and senior/vocational high school and government which is represented by the ministry of education and culture. This finding will help the English teachers to know, reflect and evaluate their knowledge on genre and specifically on the description. English teacher training as a future English teacher should change their perspective in teaching English as a foreign language. They have to learn and provide themselves with genre-based competence in teaching text genre. The students in junior and senior/vocational high school should be familiar with both (systemic functional linguistics and genre-based) perspectives. Finally, the ministry of education and culture hold the curriculum policy will adopt some approaches for one curriculum involved genre-based approach. This policy will help English teachers and learners to learn English (Kumar et al., 2016; Kalpana & Sankar, 2017).

Ministry of education and culture should evaluate the curriculum and syllabus since the fact (see the findings on former researches). It is really important to cover all genres and sub-genre with a deep understanding. English teachers need to redesign pedagogical plans. Finally, social function, generic structure, and lexicogrammatical features as a focus in the teaching-learning process can be

achieved. Lecturers should design and develop the curriculum to produce future English teachers with better competence in text genre. It is important to cover the gap to avoid missing the genre-based approach.

Method

The objective of this study is to describe the problem in writing identification. It is based on the research objective. The qualitative-descriptive research design was applied. The characteristics of qualitative research design are naturalistic, descriptive data (words), concern on the process and inductive (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). The characteristics are relevant to this research. This research described the appropriateness and inappropriateness of Junior high school students (grade eight), English department students and English Teachers.

There are three groups of participants on this research. The first group is students at junior high school. They are from grade eight, this group is chosen since they have learned descriptions since grade seven. The second group is students from the English department. They were from the sixth semester. Most of them are female, because the students at this department is dominant female. The last groups are English teachers. Students at junior high school are from SMP Negeri 13 Medan. There are ten students (five males and five females). English department students are from the University of HKBP Nommensen. They are ten students (seven females and three males), the whole of them are from the sixth semester. English teachers are from various state schools in Medan. There are five of them (four females and one male), all of them are certificate English teachers.

The participants in this research are larger than (Siahaan, 2013; Sipayung et al., 2016; Noprianto, 2017; Turnip et al., 2019), previous study. There are a large number of participants were asked to write descriptive text but only some of them participated and returned their handwriting sheets. It occurred since the situation of the pandemic situation. The test of descriptive writing is an instrument that the researcher uses to collect the data. The researcher asked the participants (Junior high school students, University students and English teachers) to write descriptive text with free topics. Since the pandemic COVID-19, The researcher used supporting instruments like Whats Up Application media to collect their descriptive text. While participants were asked to write descriptive text at least two hundred and fifty words long. The whole participants' sheets were sent through WhatsUp media in a portable document file (PDF). To keep the originality of participants' handwriting on descriptive text, the researcher made a short interview on their project through a phone call in WhatsUp media.

After collecting the descriptive text from the participants, The researcher applied the theory of genre with a perspective of systemic functional linguistics to analyze the identification in descriptive text. The researcher tabulated the first clause in descriptive text. The first clause in the descriptive text is called identification. The researcher needs to clarify whether the identification is categorized correctly or not. To achieve it, the researcher used the theory of genre with a systemic functional linguistics perspective. The researcher examined the relational process in identification.

To get a strong conclusion or finding, the researcher applied interactive data analysis (Miles et al., 2014). First, the researcher selected the whole relational process in identification which is written by students and English teachers. The researcher classifies and tabulates the process of identification, attributive and another process from the first clause in descriptive text. Finally, to make the data stronger, the researcher displayed or tabulated the appropriate and inappropriate process in identification. Through the organization of data, it allowed the researcher to draw and verify the conclusion.

Results and Discussion

To know whether the identification was categorized as appropriate or inappropriate, the researcher employed the theory of genre with a systemic functional linguistics perspective. Some examples of data and data analysis which is written by participants were presented as follows.

Table 4
Some examples of data functional linguistics perspective

No	Initial Names	Participants' level	Identification of Descriptive Text	Category	
				Appro	Inappro
1	MS	Eighth-grader	Book is a key of education.		√
2	RMH	Eighth-grader	The ballpoint pen is writing instruments tip using a small ball that rotates to control spending viscous ink.	√	
3	ES	Eighth-grader	The wardrobe is a place to store clothes.	√	
4	ASC	Eighth-grader	School clothes are used when attending school.		√
5	RS	University student	My family is my best family ever.		√
6	MS	University student	I have a big family.		√
7	RT	University student	SMANegeri 7 is one of favorite school in medan	√	
8	RSS	University student	My house is green and located Hutatongah, lumbansormin.		√
9	HS	English teacher	Scorpion is one of the largest of the insect tribe.		√
10	IRT	English teacher	Paul William Walker IV, or better known as Paul Walker is an American actor and famous for portraying	√	

No	Initial Names	Participants' level	Identification of Descriptive Text	Category	
				Appro	Inappro
			Brian O'Connor in the fast and the fast furious movie.		

Based on the data analysis above, the researcher categorized that MS and ES *identification* is inappropriate.

Table 5
Relational-attributive

	Carrier	Relational-Attributive	Attribute
MS	Book	is	a key of education
ES	The wardrobe	is	a place to store clothes

The *Identification* in descriptive which is written by MS like “*Book is a key of education*”. The process is categorized as inappropriate because not indicate a *relational identifying process*. The process is categorized as a *relational attributive process*. It can be seen from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics theory. Besides, based on genre theory, it can be examined by position change. The clause of “*Book is a key of education*” is changed become “*A key of education is book*”. The clause of “*A key of education is book*” is reversible however, it does not keep the original meaning. Both theories have rejected this clause (*Book is a key of education*) as *identified* in the description text.

The Identification in descriptive which is written by ES like “*The wardrobe is a place to store clothes*”. The process of is categorized as inappropriate because not to indicate a relational identifying process. The process of is categorized as a relational attributive process. It can be seen from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics theory. Besides, based on genre theory, it can be examined by position change. The clause “*The wardrobe is a place to store clothes*” is changed become “*a place to store clothes is the wardrobe*”. The clause of “*a place to store clothes is the wardrobe*” is reversible however, it does not keep the original meaning. Not only a wardrobe for us to store clothes but it can be in other places. Both theories (systemic functional linguistics and genre) are rejected on the clause (*The wardrobe is a place to store clothes*) as identified in the description text.

The identification which is written by RT is categorized as appropriate. The description can be seen as follow.

Table 6
The identification which is written by RT

	Token	Relational-Identifying	Value
RT	SMA Negeri 7	is	one of favorite school in Medan

The token of "SMA Negeri 7" is categorized specifically since the identities are written explicitly. In other words, if the participant is specifically called token however if it is generic or general called carrier. Also, the token must be related by identifying the process. In other words, the role of the participant in identifying process is token and value. The clause of "SMA Negeri 7" is one of favorite school in Medan" is reversible and hold the original meaning. Both theories have accepted the clause as identification in description text.

A similar analysis was done by the researcher to examine whether identification categories were appropriate or not. The finding of this research can be described in the following table.

Table 7
Appropriate and Inappropriate in writing identification

No	Participants	Appropriate	Inappropriate
1	Students at grade eight	50%	50%
2	University Students	20%	80%
3	English Teacher	60%	40%

There are fifty percent (50%) of students grade seven categorized appropriate to write identification and the rest is inappropriate. The level of university students who are categorized as appropriate is twenty percent (20%), however, the rest (80%) categorized inappropriately. Finally, the table above indicates that English teachers categorized success in starting to write descriptive text by only 60%. From the three groups (grade seven, university students and English teacher) the dominant success to write identification in the descriptive text is an English teacher. Contrary, the dominant inappropriate to write identification in the descriptive text is placed by university students. It consists of eighty percent (80%).

The result above indicates whole participants did not know how to write identification appropriately in starting to write a descriptive text. This poor ability should be solved by enlarging the knowledge on the usage of the identification process. Whole participants should know to differ general and specific participants. Besides, Learners and teachers of English should familiar with the group process like identifying and attributive. The finding indicates an unsatisfactory because most of the participants in this research are not able to write identification based on the theory. In addition to that, this finding is supported by the previous researcher.

([Gerot & Wignel, 1994](#)), state that identification must be written with the identifying process and the participants are token and value. The result of this research state that 50 % of students in grade eight incorrectly wrote identification. In addition to that, only 20% of English department students can write identification based on the theory of genre and systemic functional linguistics. The last participants are English teachers. 60% of them wrote identification properly. This finding still leaves a gap between theories and fact.

Previous findings like (Siahaan, 2013), revealed that the low achievers were still weak in identifying the generic structure of a descriptive text and the rest (middle and high achievers) categorized well. These findings did not mention explicitly which part of the generic structure, it is similar to (Noprianto, 2017), and (Turnip et al., 2019). However, this research explicitly states its part namely identification. Based on the concept of (Siahaan, 2013), about the research participant, a sample of this research involved English teacher training and English teacher. They are categorized as high proficiency achievers. However, their result in writing identification was categorized as weak.

(Sipayung et al., 2016), described that most of the students (64,7%) constructed descriptive text with the incorrect process (like attribution: 52,94% and other processes: 11,76%) in writing identification. Their research explicitly mentions the result however their sample only comes from English students however this sample more heterogeneous. They are from junior high school, English department students and English teachers. The result is more comprehensive.

(Anggun, 2016), investigated electronic English textbook published Department of Education and culture entitled Bahasa Inggris for senior High School Grade X. The researcher stated that three of four generic structures did not meet the characteristics. It reflects the weak competence of the writer on the genre-based approach. (Pemerintah, 2021) states that teaching materials must be formulated based on the science concept. This statement should be applied by the Department of Education and culture before publishing electronic textbooks like Bahasa Inggris for senior High School Grade X or the other.

The policy on curriculum and syllabus about writing materials should be evaluated again by our government through the ministry of education and culture. The government can give assistance and guidance to improve the teacher's quality in teaching (Sofiana et al., 2019). The weakness of English teachers to write identification on the descriptive text to indicate that they never learned about or lack emphasis on it. Besides, students at English language education as future English teacher should know it more. It is clearly described in the English department's curriculum. In the subject "Writing I" the students are provided with some competencies in writing paragraphs. Students are taught to write the outline (pre-writing and drafting) of the paragraph. In the subject of "writing II" the students are provided with the ability to write an essay. In "writing III (cultural writing)" the students are taught on main competencies namely writing with various genres. Finally, "writing IV" is taught for students' competence in writing a research paper or scientific writing.

Based on the description on writing I, II, III, and IV above related to the percentage of student ability (appropriate). English department or faculty of teacher training needs to revise the curriculum at the level of the university. The evaluation or revision is needed to produce high competence (quality) of English teacher training. The researcher suggests that "writing I" focuses on five genres (narrative, descriptive, recount, explanatory, recounts). "Writing II" focuses on five genres (spoof, argumentation, reports, news item, anecdote). "Writing III" focuses on four genres (procedure, hortatory, discussion, and reviews). These suggestions

are suggested because writing paragraphs and essays are already learned in junior and senior high school.

Workshop and seminar about writing genre are important to conduct because 60% of English teacher wrote incorrect Identification. The workshop should provide collaboration with a series of higher thinking tasks for the English teacher (Ahmed & Asraf, 2018). Writing workshop has its general framework like mini-lesson and instruction (Henry et al., 2020). After having good knowledge of the writing genre, English teachers can use alternative teaching methods to improve student's skills in the writing genre especially in writing descriptive text. This alternative should not lead to the students' scores but also the value of satisfaction.

Conclusion

The participants of this research come from three groups. Most of them categorized lack to formulate well identification in descriptive text. The result of this research to inform the weakness of pedagogical knowledge on whole groups of participants. Redesigning on pedagogic plan really important to solve this situation. Some implications considering on generic structure of the descriptive text will innovate the lesson plan which emphasizes the generic structure on the common genre. The development of teachers' competence and lecturers' competence. The result of this study can not be generalized since the participants are still limited and need more comprehension research. In addition to that, the scope of this research only at identification. It is recommended to the next researcher to investigate other description parts, like the second schema (description), social function and lexicogrammatical features with various or larger participants.

Based on the researcher's observation, mistaken in formulating good identification because they are mistaken to choose specific participants. Most of them used general participants. To write identification the writer needs to write explicitly the identity of the participant or token. The identity of a specific phenomenon, person, place and thing is needed and important to formulate identification. Identifying process and specific participants are prerequisite things in constructing the first generic structure in the description. However, in writing the second generic in the description, the writer can use both processes (attributive or identifying). A high frequency of epithet to describe parts, characteristics and qualities are needed in writing a descriptive genre. The same frequent of classifiers in the nominal group is important in writing descriptions. The usage of the simple present tense is the most important thing for the learner of English as a foreign language. The writer needs to aware of some regulations above. It is important to the students to make HOTS activity (analyzing, evaluating and creating) based on the formulation above. Finally, the learner or even the English teachers can solve the problem of writing identification in the description text. The researcher suggests to the further researcher for investigating other common genres.

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