

## Guest blog post by author Vyvyan Evans (at Lynn's Romance Enthusiasm) 17 May 2023

### **Topic: Does your profession make it easier, or harder, when you're developing a book?**

My background is in linguistics and cognitive science—I have a PhD in linguistics and have spent a career working as a university professor of linguistics.

I think that whatever the genre of writing, there are specific challenges, as well as some broad similarities. I have written and published technical books on language and mind, works of reference such as glossaries and textbooks, as well popular science books. Each of these genres requires a different style of presentation. But the commonality is that the writing style is expository: the message is key, and that must be explained clearly in an audience-specific way, whether writing for students, interested lay-readers of language and science, or seasoned academic experts.

In terms of writing genre fiction (such as science fiction), the key difference is that the message emerges through the story. Hence, the exposition (of a more academic style) takes a backseat. In genre fiction, as the messages derive from (and through) the story, which is the central driver of fiction, the aphorism 'show, don't tell' becomes key.

I find science fiction to be appealing as a genre, as it really is an advantage to be a subject matter expert. To write convincingly, especially in so-called 'hard' science fiction, such as *The Babel Apocalypse*, which strives for scientific accuracy, it is important to have relevant background in the story and the ideas being conveyed. And it seems to me that this cannot be adequately replicated without some meaningful level of expertise.

Isaac Asimov, for instance, one of the genre's early pioneers, was a Professor of Biochemistry at Boston University, also possessing a background in physics and mathematics. In short, it's important to write what you know. And from that perspective, it was a relatively easy step to move from writing about language for a technical audience to writing about the future of language for a speculative fiction audience.

URL: <http://lynnromanceenthusiast.blogspot.com/>