

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

The Effect of Process Genre Approach of Teaching Writing on Students' Paragraph Writing Performance: The Case of Grade 11 Abay Minch Preparatory School Students

Dr. Haile Kassahun Bewuket

Researcher, Department of English Language and Literature
College of Social Science and Humanities, Debre Markos University, Ethiopia

Aman Matebie

Teacher, College of Social Science and Humanities, Debre Markos University, Ethiopia

Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of process genre approach of teaching writing on preparatory school students' writing performance. Quasi-experimental pre-test post-test research design was employed. From nineteen sections of grade eleven ten sections were randomly selected and took pre-test to select two intact groups. Based on the test results, two homogeneous groups were identified. Process genre and the product approaches were used for the experimental and the control groups, respectively. Structured data collection instrument had been used for primary data collection. Finally, one sample t test, independent samples t-test and paired t-test had been applied to check if any improvement had happened in writing skill. To check the mean difference in the area of writing One Way ANOVA had been applied. Outcome showed almost equal results for both control and test groups with value of 4.93 and 4.40 respectively. Nevertheless, after the treatment, the findings indicated that the experimental group significantly outperformed ($p < .05$) as compared to the students in the control group which showed the supremacy of process-genre approach over the product approach to teaching writing. The post-test mean results for the experimental and control groups were 5.35 and 4.24, respectively. Therefore, the major findings of the study revealed that process genre approach significantly helped the students to improve their paragraph writing skills in EFL classrooms. Besides, the results of the study showed that process genre approach has significant effect on improving students writing components of organization and mechanics. Ultimately it has been highly recommended to faculties for using the process genre approach with an aim to upgrade paragraph writing skills of pupils.

Keywords: Process genre, measurements, mechanics, product oriented, process oriented

1. Introduction

Writing is a way of expressing ideas, feelings, and opinions in written script. It is also the communication of content for a purpose to an audience (Harmer, 2004). Thus, writing is a process of sharing information, message, ideas, or thoughts to intended audience in the form of script.

There are difference ways for the teaching of writing. According to Badger and White (2000), product based, process based, genre based and process genre based are most commonly used. In the product approach, students are normally told to write an essay imitating a given pattern. The objective and the focus of product approach is on the written product rather than on how the student should approach the process of writing (Badger & White, 2000). The process approach focuses on how a text is written instead of the final outcome (product). Another study by Hyland (2003), revealed that the process approach has a significant effect for upgrading writing skill as well as teaching procedure. Using the genre approach means employing of a range of methods in a classroom. That includes a framework involving students' investigation of the texts and context based on target situations, encouraging reflection on writing practices, exploiting texts from different types of genre, and creating mixed genre portfolios.

This approach is helpful to study association between purpose and form for a specified genre. It uses cyclic approach for pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing. These steps develop the awareness level of students. It also ensures that grammatical and vocabulary items should be taught together not separately. The process genre approach divides the whole process into six steps (Badger and White, 2000). The steps are: preparation, modeling, planning, join constructing, independent constructing & revising. Secondary and preparatory students in our context (Ethiopia) do not seem to have adequate competency in all language skills and sub-skills in general and in writing skill in particular. Cognizant of that fact, Ministry of Education (MoE, 1994) set minimum learning competency for each skill in each grade level. According to the competency set for writing skill for preparatory students, students are supposed to write paragraph and essay level compositions in clear and understandable manner. Judged in light of the minimum competency set for the level, students have a problem of diction, logical organization, use correct grammatical pattern, and following written language

conventions. There are students who cannot even write meaningful sentences at the preparatory level. And such low level of writing proficiency, according to (Abiye, 2000), makes their academic success difficult when they join university. Many factors like teachers' teaching style, students' background, and availability of resources might have contributed the low level of students writing. From those and other factors, researchers strong believe that the way teachers approach teaching writing greatly affected student's success in writing. It is observed that teachers are teaching writing in more of traditional (product based) approach. This means they focus on student's linguistic knowledge and language patterns. The teachers' heavy reliance on traditional, product approach has not allowed the students to write effectively. Empirical evidences show that product approach to teaching writing has little contribution in helping students write better compared to process or process genre approach to teaching writing.

As to the researchers, one way to address students writing problem in preparatory schools is to change the approach being employed in teaching writing. Before doing that, what is needed to be done is to test the effectiveness of the teaching approach deemed to be employed taking small group of students. Thus, though process genre approach to teaching writing is found to be productive in teaching writing in different contexts, it needs to be tested out in our context (Abay Minch Preparatory School).

In relation to process genre approach to teaching writing, different international and local studies have been carried out. To start with the international ones, for example, on a Nigerian polytechnic college study conducted by Babalola (2012) discussed the effects of process-genre based approach on the English writing performance of computer science students. The results showed significant improvement. Indonesian EFL writing effect on various personality had been done by Silvira and Bambang (2017) on Junior High School students by using quasi-experimental research design. Results indicated that for each component like organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics effect of process genre approach is highly appreciable. On computer science students, Assagaf (2016) performed a research on 17 students which also yield positive result. Finding of Renal (2015) also is in the same line. But a study done by Herawiti (2015) cited in Silvira and Bambang (2017), discussed the inefficiency of this approach. According to author lack of textual knowledge can be the reason for the failure of this approach. When it comes to local researches conducted on the issue, Dawit (2013) has conducted a study on enhancing students' writing skills through the genre approach. This study was conducted to test to what extent genre approach help Bahir Dar University English majoring students to improve their argumentative essay writing. The study showed that there was significant improvement between the pre and post test results. Amare (2017) in his study focused on teachers' cognition on process genre approach and practice of teaching writing skills in EFL context. He found that although English language instructors were familiar to process genre approach and they believe this approach helps to improve the students' writing skill, they did the opposite in the EFL classes. He also added that lack of students' interest, students' language competency and large class size were the obstacles in teaching writing skills in the EFL context. Study by Mulu & Mena (2016) also mentioned the effectiveness of process genre approach for improving students' writing skills. Another study by Tola (2007) cited in Amare (2017), also highlighted the efficacy of teaching writing skills for Assela Teachers College. Here ported that there was a contradiction between the teachers' belief about teaching writing and what they actually do in the class room. To the best knowledge of the researchers, there is no research work conducted on the effect of process genre approach of teaching writing in Ethiopian preparatory schools in a large class context. Besides, though most studies conducted on the issue reported the effectiveness of the approach in teaching writing, there are still some empirical evidences that showed no difference on the achievement of students who were exposed to process genre approach and other approaches. Thus, the motivation for conducting this study mainly emanated from the observed problems, and inconclusive nature of the findings of the studies conducted so far on the effectiveness of process genre approach to teaching writing. This research has therefore tried to investigate the effect of process genre approach of teaching writing on student's paragraph writing performance: the case of Abay Minch Preparatory school Grade 11 students in a large class (above 60 students each class) context.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

To measure the overall improvement in the area of writing paragraphs is the main purpose of this research. Keeping in mind this purpose the following objectives have been framed:

- To find out the influence of process genre approach of teaching writing for enhancing the paragraph writing skills.
- Identification of features through which writing would be improved by using this approach.
- Explanation about the behaviors of the experimental group students towards process genre approach of teaching writing.

1.2. Scope of the Study

The study was delimited to the grade 11 students of Abay Minch Secondary and Preparatory School, West Gojjam, Ethiopia. This research tries to find out improvement or up gradation in writing skill while writing paragraphs. It has highlighted wide array of components like grammar, vocabulary, text organization and mechanics where students' performances can be judged. Other aspects related to teaching writing were left for further study.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

Quasi-experimental pre-test post-test research design was used to explore the effect of process-genre approach on students writing skill. In doing so, two homogeneous groups having almost equal performance in paragraph writing were selected using a pre-test. Next, the groups were assigned as experimental and control group using simple random sampling. The experimental group was exposed to process genre approach and the control group to the conventional product-oriented approach to teaching writing.

2.2. Population and Sampling Techniques

Abay Minch General and Preparatory School was selected by purposive sampling considering the vicinity of the school and ease of consent. First, from the preparatory school, grade 11 students were selected by purposive sampling. Again, from 19 sections of grade 11 students, 10 (slightly more than half) sections were randomly selected because they were considered as representative samples. As mentioned above, to select two intact groups, pre-test was administered. Out of ten section students who took pre-test, two sections having similar mean were selected. From the selected two sections, one section was assigned as a control group and the other section was assigned as an experimental group randomly. The experimental group was taught writing using the model of process genre approach. The implementation was based on writing package which were designed in line with the content of national curriculum for the grade level and the principles of process-genre approach. Methods and appropriate tasks of process genre approach of teaching were applied in the classroom whereas, the control group was taught writing by using product approach to teaching writing. Equal contents, attention and time were given for both groups.

2.3. Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection

The study employed two types of data collection instruments namely tests and questionnaire. Two equivalent writing tests were prepared in line with what is stipulated in the syllabus for grade 11 students. After preparing the tests, they were given to experts in the field to have comments on the appropriateness of the tests for the level. Based on comments of experts, amendments were made. One of the tests was used to check homogeneity of the groups before the intervention and the second one was used to compare the writing performance of the two groups after the intervention was made. Questionnaire was employed to collect data about experimental group students' attitude towards process genre approach of teaching writing. To ascertain validity and reliability of items of questionnaire, expert judgment was also used. The researcher collected data in the following procedures. Before commencing this study, pretest was being applied on both control and test group. Taking reference from Badger and white (2000) model of teaching writing through process genre approach, methods of teaching writing have been applied on test group. Both groups were taught in different teaching approaches for six weeks (7 hours in each week) excluding homework and project work activities. A week later after completing the intervention, the experimental and the control groups were made to write paragraphs as a post-test. Then the participants were given feedback. Finally, closed ended questionnaires were distributed for the experimental groups to identify their attitudes towards the process genre approach of teaching writing.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from target sample of students were analyzed quantitatively. The data which were collected by the questionnaire were presented in the form of Likert scales so as to describe the students' attitudes towards process genre approach of teaching writing. Descriptive statistics, frequency distribution and percentage were used. Five-point Likert scales are minimized into three, agree, somewhat agree and disagree in order to make the analysis manageable.

One-way ANOVA, independent sample t-test and paired t-test were used to analyze the test results of the groups. One-way ANOVA was used for the comparison of writing components in which the researchers manipulated the effect of each writing aspect up on students' writing improvement. To select two intact groups for comparison, independent sample t-test was used.

For both the pre-test and post-test outcomes, comparison between test and control groups have been done by using Independent sample t-test. Moreover, to check the before-after improvement paired t-test has been applied between pre-test and post test scores (Lynch, 1996). The blow mentioned table highlighted the results regarding the improvement in performance of teaching writing on students' paragraph writing skills.

4. Result and Discussion

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pre-test	Control	62	4.9355	1.89798	.24104
	experimental	62	4.4032	2.04426	.25962

Table 1: The Result of Homogeneity Test

To check the homogeneity, pre-test has been conducted on both test and control groups. This test indicates whether both these groups are equal or not. Among many tests Levine's Test has been selected to check homogeneity. P-value ≥ 0.05 indicates that the data are homogenous in nature. Here the p-value is 0.5323, which is higher than the level of

significance 0.05. Hence, it can be concluded that two groups are homogenous before the commencement of the study (Table 1).

4.1. Comparison of Writing Performance between the Control and the Experimental Groups

	Leven's Total For Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig	T	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.978	.325	1.502	122	1.36	.53226	.35427	-.16905	1.23357
Equal variances not assumed			1.502	121.334	136	.53226	.35427	-.16909	1.23360

Table 2: Independent Samples T-Test for the Results of Pre- Test

As indicated in Table 2, there is no significant difference between scores of experimental groups ($M = 4.4032$ $SD = 2.04426$) and the control group ($M = 4.9355$ $SD = 1.89798$), which indicates that the two groups have similar performance at the outset.

Based on the process genre and product approaches of teaching, writing skills for both test and control group have been observed for six weeks. Next post-test has been applied and independent sample t-test and paired sample t-tests have been used to compute results. Outcomes are being shown in the below mentioned table.

	Students' Scores	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
post-test	Control	62	4.2419	1.96432	.24947
	Experimental	62	5.3548	2.18862	.27796

Table 3: The Post-Test Result of Control and Experimental Groups

The experimental group students mean score in the post-test ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 2.18$) was quite greater than the control group ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.96$). Simply looking at the mean scores presented, one may conclude that means of the experimental group surpasses that of the comparison group after the intervention. However, the extent to which this difference was statistically significant need be checked using inferential statistics. Table 3.4 below presents results of the independent samples t-test of the two groups.

	Leven's Total for Equality of variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig	T	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.770	.186	-2.98	122	1.36	.003	.37349	-1.85226	-.37355
Equal variances not assumed			-2.98	120.601	136	.003	.37349	-1.85235	-.37346

Table 4: The Result of the Independent Samples T-Test of Post-Test Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

The results of the comparison of post-test scores of the groups, presented in Table 4 above, reveals a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group. Thus, an independent sample t-test was computed to see the extent of significance. An independent sample t-test displayed in table 3.4 reveals that the experimental group

significantly outperformed the comparison group ($t=2.98$, $df=122$, $p=.003<.05$). Consequently, we can conclude that process genre approach has positive effect to improve EFL students' writing skills. Thus, confirms the effectiveness of process genre approach of teaching paragraph writing. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Thomas Chow; 2007, Babalola; 2012 & Assagaf; 2016).

Tests	N	M	SD	Paired Difference				
				Mean	SD	t	df	sig(2-tailed)
Pre-test	62	4.4032	2.04426	-3.3793	2.10919	.17840	61	.000*
Post-test	62	5.3548	2.18862					

Table 5: Summary of Paired T-Test for the Experimental Group

As can be seen in table 4.5 above, a comparison of the mean scores of the experimental group pre-test ($M=4.4032$, $SD=2.04426$) is quite less than post-test mean score ($M=5.3548$, $SD=2.18862$). In order to conclude whether this mean score difference is significant or not, paired sample t-test is sought. Paired sample t-test revealed that there is statistically significant difference on the experimental group between pre-test and posttest result ($t = -.17840$, $df=61$, $p<.01$) less than at the significance level of .05.

Tests	N	M	SD	Paired Difference				
				Mean	SD	t	df	sig(2-tailed)
Pre-test	62	4.9355	1.89798	.69	2.86	1.9	61.0	61
Post-test	62	4.2419	1.96432					

Table 6: Summary of Paired T-Test for the Control Group

Table 6 shows that a comparison of the control group means score in the pre-test ($M=4.9355$, $SD=1.89798$) is less than post-test ($M=4.2419$, $SD=1.96432$). In order to conclude whether this means score difference is significant or not, paired sample t-test is required. Paired sample t-test revealed in Table 6 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference on the control group's pre-test and post test results ($t = .1.9$, $df=61$, $p, 0.61p>.05$) greater than significant limits.

4.2. Comparison of Groups in Terms of Writing Components

In addition to the above statistics, further discussion is needed about the writing components by using statistical analysis. The mean difference between and within the groups was analyzed specifically based on writing components; organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Organization	Between Groups	.976	1	.976	1.110	.294
	Within Groups	107.242	122	.879		
	Total	108.218	123			
Grammar	Between Groups	.653	1	.653	.911	.342
	Within Groups	87.435	122	.717		
	Total	88.089	123			
Mechanics	Between Groups	.516	1	.516	.732	.394
	Within Groups	86.032	122	.705		
	Total	86.548	123			
Vocabulary	Between Groups	1.161	1	1.161	1.473	.227
	Within Groups	96.194	122	.788		
	Total	97.355	123			

Table 7: Comparison of Groups in Terms of the Writing Components

Regarding to the pre-test results of writing components, to determine difference for between and within groups, ANOVA has been applied. Table 7 provides the p-value as .29 which is greater than .05. So, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference for mean score in case of between and within the groups.

Moreover, in relation to another writing component (grammar) Table 7 shows that the significance level was 0.34. It means the value was greater than the accepted significant level 0.05 ($\text{sig } 0.34 \geq \text{sig } 0.05$). Therefore, there was no significant difference in grammar, and mechanics. In a similar manner, in the other components of writing (mechanics and vocabulary), there were no significant difference in the students' pre-test results.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Organization	Between Groups	30.008	1	30.008	31.786	.000
	Within Groups	115.177	122	.944		
	Total	145.185	123			
Grammar	Between Groups	.395	1	.395	.421	.518
	Within Groups	114.597	122	.939		
	Total	114.992	123			
Mechanics	Between Groups	15.613	1	15.613	13.107	.000
	Within Groups	145.323	122	1.191		
	Total	160.935	123			
Vocabulary	Between Groups	.073	1	.073	.080	.777
	Within Groups	110.274	122	.904		
	Total	110.347	123			

Table 8: Post Results of the Writing Components

In the pre-test, all the writing components chosen by the researchers did not have any significant difference between and within the groups. After the intervention was made, the first writing component listed in Table 8 is organization. The p-value is .000 which is less than .05. hence it can be said that there is difference between pupils who were taught by process-genre approach and those who were not taught by using process genre approach. For mechanics, another component of writing p-values is again .000. this also notifies significant difference between pupils who were taught by process-genre approach (test group) and those who were not taught by using process genre approach (control group).

To the contrary, the remaining writing components (grammar and vocabulary) were not relatively improved. To say this, the significant level of grammar and vocabulary were 0.518& 0.777, respectively. These levels are greater than the accepted significant level 0.05 (sig0.518, sig 0.777 \geq 0.05). This shows that there was no significant difference between the students who were taught by process genre approach and those who were not taught by using process-genre approach.

4.3. Attitudes Experimental Group Students towards Process-Genre Approach

Attributes for Attitude towards Process Genre Approach of Teaching Writing	Agree		Somewhat Agree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
I like to draft, edit and revise my paragraphs before publishing.	38	64.4	17	28.8	4	6.7
I don't like to follow processes in my writing.	4	6.7	18	30.5	37	62.7
I am interested in knowing different forms of English paragraphs	43	72.8	16	27.1	0	0
I have confidence in writing with the help of my peers and teachers.	41	69.4	17	28.8	1	1.6
I don't like to work with my peers and teachers when writing	3	5.08	9	15.2	47	79.6
Model texts and real situations help to write better.	39	66.1	19	32.2	1	1.6
Knowing the purpose and the form of a topic is helpful for learning writing	54	91.5	3	5.08	2	3.3
Knowing the purpose and the form of a topic is not important for learning writing.	7	11.8	9	15.2	43	72.8
I am interested in getting continuous support and feedback of teachers in my writing	36	61.01	19	32	4	6.7
Looking sample paragraphs and thinking real situations are not useful for improving writing.	8	13.5	4	6.7	47	79.6
I don't want teachers support and feedback in my writing	7	11.8	9	15.2	43	72.8
I like my compositions to be evaluated.	36	61.01	18	30.5	5	5.4
I do not like my compositions to be evaluated	9	15.2	11	18.6	39	66

Table 9: Attitudes of Experimental Groups towards Process-Genre Approach

According to Table 9, the majority of the respondents (64.4%) agree that they like to draft, edit and revise my paragraphs before publishing. In this respect 28.8% of them have negative attitudes towards following writing processes in some extent.

Significant numbers of the students (72.8%) were interested in knowing different forms of English paragraphs, whereas 27.1% of the respondents partially share the interest of these respondents. 41% of the student writers agreed

that they like writing when they work with their teachers and peers. 28.8% of them partially agreed with performing writing tasks with their teachers and peers. Nearly three-fourth (66%) of the students responded that model texts and real situations helped them to write better where as 32.2% of the respondents have negative attitudes to this idea. Almost all (91.5%) of students believed that knowing the purpose and the form of a text is important for learning writing.

The majority (61.01%) of the student writers were interested in getting continuous support and feedback from teachers whereas 32% of them agreed with the idea to some extent. More than half (61.1%) of the students like their composition to be evaluated. Whereas 30.5% of the participants had negative perception about this idea.

5. Conclusion

This study has reported the effect of the process-genre approach in improving students' paragraph writing skills on Abay Minch Preparatory students. Considering the importance of developing students' writing skill, especially at the preparatory school level of education, this research is designed in such a way to seek effects of process genre approach of teaching writing in improving the ability to compose paragraphs. On the basis of the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made. It is assumed that the approach is better to solve the EFL students writing problem and give benefits to learning process such as motivating students, improving social interaction in the classroom, creating a positive learning environment and writing skills. In addition, process genre is an admirable approach for teaching students how to write paragraphs and also it initiates them working with others in collaboration. This approach is away to help second language learners to write coherent, and organized paragraphs. Moreover, average, low scorers, students with learning disability can be immensely benefitted by this. This study also revealed that both organization and mechanics can be effectively benefitted through the process-genre approach. Besides, students had positive attitude towards the process genre approach because they were interested in constructing meaningful sentences, writing organized paragraphs, and doing plenty of writing tasks in the classroom and out of it.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study teachers who are teaching writing in preparatory schools in general and grade 11 students in particular are advised to employ process genre approach to writing to help students write better.

7. References

- i. Amare Tesfie (2017). Teachers' Cognition on Process genre approach and Practice of Teaching writing skill in EFL context. *English for Specific Purposes World*, world.info, Issue No.54, v.19.
- ii. Assaggaf, H. (2016). A process genre approach to teaching report writing to Arab EFL computer science students. *International Journal of English Linguistics*; 6 (6).
- iii. Badger, R, and G. White (2000). A Process- genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal*,5
- iv. Babalola, H. A. L. (2012). Effects of process-genre based approach on the written English performance of computer science students in a Nigerian polytechnic. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(6), 1-7.
- v. Chow, T. V (2007). *English as a global Language*.
- vi. Dawit, Amonge (2013). Enhancing students' writing skills through the genre approach. *International Journal of English and Literature*.
- vii. Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- viii. Herawati, Y. W. (2015). *The Effect of Process-Genre Approach on Students' Argumentative Essay in a Tertiary EFL Classroom*. Unpublished Dissertation. Malang: State University of Malang
- ix. Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- x. Isaeni, N. (2012). *A process genre approach to teaching writing narrative texts in a secondary EFL classroom*. Unpublished Dissertation. Bandung: Indonesian University of education.
- xiii. Lynch, M. 1996. A quantitative-genetic perspective on conservation issues, pp. 471-501. In J. Avise and J. Hamrick (eds.) *Conservation Genetics: Case Histories from Nature*. Chapman and Hall, New York.
- xv. MoE. (1994). *The New Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- xvi. MuluGeta and MennaOlango (2016).The impact of blended learning in developing students' writing skills:HawassaUmiversity in focus, *Africa educational research journal*, 4(2), p.49-68.
- xvii. Silvira, A. &Banbang, Y.C. (2017). The effect of process genre approach on Indonesian EFL writing achievement across personality. *International Journal of English language and linguistic Research*, Vol. 5, No. 3 pp. 39-48.
- xviii. TolaTeshome (2007). *Exploring the effectiveness of teaching and learning of the writing skills: Assela Teacher education in focus*. Unpublished MA thesis, Addis Ababa University.