Effect of Process-Genre Approach on Students' Writing Skill: Timuga Preparatory School 11Th Grade in Focus

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Abstract

This study was administered to examine the effects of process-genre instruction in the EFL writing class. It also explored the incorporation of rhetorical moves and steps on their essay. Besides, a perception of students on the effectiveness of intervention was assessed. It was delimited at 11th grade Timuga Preparatory School. To this end, quasi-experimental design was employed. Section A (N=42) and C (N=41) were participants of the study as an experimental group (EG) and control group (CG) respectively using Simple random sampling technique. The EG was exposed for process-genre intervention while the CG received the usual writing instruction. Two research instruments were used to collect data: pre-post intervention writing test and interview. The experimental and controlling procedure was done accordingly. Grade 11 English students textbook was used as an instructional material both for EG and CG. Independent samples t- test was employed to compare the test scores of the two groups at the pre-post test and a paired samples t- test for inter group comparison. Moreover, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were also employed. Based on the findings of this study, process-genre writing instruction proved to be a helpful instructional method to EFL writing classes. Students showed an attempt in employing rhetorical moves and steps in the process of composition. Student's perception towards process-genre writing instruction was positively affected. EFL teachers should be technical and knowledgeable in employing the instruction in their writing classroom. Finally, further research is recommended to investigate the effects of the process-genre based writing instruction from different perspectives as an instructional technique in EFL writing classroom by extending the intervention time.

Keywords: Writing skill, Process writing, Genre writing, process-genre Approach

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1. Background of the Study

The various instructions employed in EFL classroom can determine the language proficiency of learners. Accordingly, there were paradigm shifts on writing skill and its approach. To begin with, there was a move from the spotlight on writing as a product to that of a process is one of the major significant transformations in teaching writing (Kroll, Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002; Hyland, 2003; Jarunthawatchai, 2010). However, the process approach advances students' writing ability, it has limitations (Kim & Kim, 2005). Consequently, the genre approach appeared as an alternative view of teaching writing. A genre-based approach as involvement had students performing better in writing than those exposed to the process approach (Hyland, 2007; Nueva, 2016). Therefore, when the process approach is joined with the genre approach, students are familiar with the language features that characterize the type of academic writing expected of them.

The concept of process-genre combined approach is basically a combination of models both from the process-based approach and the genre-based approach seems more useful to put up a text in a familiar genre (Kim & Kim, 2005).

Some may consider writing is an easy process; it is the act of picking up a pen and forming letters. Hence, the ability to write is indispensable for academic achievement in secondary school level as it becomes the foundation for a significant amount of learning. In line with this, Cliff and Hanslo (2009) observed that what students have learned at secondary school appears to make them better prepared to cope with the academic demands they face in higher education and also favorably associated with academic success and graduation.

As a result, the eleventh grade is the beginning of the second level of the secondary education, which is a preparatory phase for higher education since 2001. In this context, to handle the educational requirement of academic studies and improve general language instruction, grade 11 students need to write following the appropriate process and understanding the social context of writing in English. Because of this significance, it is advisable to employ teaching methods that assure the development of their writing proficiency. Students' language proficiency is mainly affected by the teaching methods employed in the classroom (Cunningthsworth, 1984).

2. Statement of the Problem

Even though learning to produce a high quality written text is one of the essential learning processes of writing, being a good writer is not easy for everyone that many students come into view enormous and huge problems. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), "…writing is a technology, a set of skills which must be practiced through experience."

Many local writing researches that a range of focuses and grade levels had been conducted, to cite but a few, Mesfin (2013) , Teshome (2007) and Yonas (1996), evidently shows that students writing skill is at the lower level. In such connection, Timuga Preparatory School students were not different from those previously studied. Writing assignments and tests of grade eleven students indicated that they are at the lower level. As a result of this, the researcher has an experience in teaching English for five years in eleventh grade level and closely observed the problem is abundantly deep rooted.

One reason that might be accredited to students' low writing performance more than others is the effectiveness of the instruction employed in EFL writing class. As a number of writing researchers such as Wilson (2003) report, though writing is one of the four basic language skills which need goal-oriented instruction like other language skills, it has long been the most neglected skill.

For this reason, implementing process-genre writing instruction in EFL classroom may contribute in some part for the development of writing ability of students. Those who lack knowledge of the text organization and of the language used conventionally for a particular audience will need some assistance and some input (Rusinovci, 2015). More importantly, EFL teachers should include the listening, speaking, and reading skills in the writing class. Integrating the four language skills promotes the expansion of the students' overall language competence (Goodman 1986).

The beginning of the current study under investigation was motivated by related program termed process-genre writing instruction with Rusinovci (2015), Agibuay (2015), Jarunthawatchai, (2010), Hanane (2014/2015) and their area of study was a university students in focus where the course writing skill is independently taught by expert teacher; nevertheless, this process-genre intervention program was given for preparatory students. Furthermore, genre moves and steps employed in the essay were analyzed and perception of participants towards the intervention program was assessed unlike from the previous studies.

Having this all, the effect of process-genre writing approach at Preparatory level in particular is under explored yet and therefore, examining the effect of process-genre instruction on student's writing skill found to be important.

3. Hypothesis of the study
►Students who are taught via process-genre approach will show greater pre-to-post intervention improvement in their writing skill than students who are taught by a usual approach.

4. Research questions
Do experimental students will show improvement in employing some rhetorical moves and steps on their process of composition?
What will be students' perception towards the effectiveness of process-genre writing instruction?

5. Objectives of the study
5.1. General objective of the study
The general objective of this study was to examine effect of process-genre approach on students' writing skill at Timuga Preparatory School grade 11 students in focus.

5.2. Specific objectives of the study
The study aims to meet the following specific objectives
• To evaluate effect of process-genre approach on students' writing skill.
 • To identify some rhetorical moves and steps employed in students' essays.
• To explore the perception of students' towards process-genre writing approach.

6. Scope of the study
This study was delimited in studying only effect of process-genre approach on Students' writing skill in particular reference to 11th grade Timuga Preparatory School which is located in the Southern Zonal Administration of Tigray Regional State at Raya Alamata Woreda.
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REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
2. Theoretical Frame Work
2.1. Cognitive constructivism
Learning is an active process. The students who are learning experience directly, making errors, and then looking for solutions are all vital for the assimilation and accommodation of information (Piaget's, 1967). He also stresses the concept that language is a tool of thinking. Hence, cognitive process theory has clearly influenced writing instruction.

2.2. Social constructivism

An individual's cognitive system is a result of communication in social groups and cannot be separated from social life (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Besides, he states that language helps individuals to build new strategies when they speak with others or even with themselves. This stresses the view that learning happens best when learners engage in tasks that are within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP), the area between what they can do independently and what they can do with assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). His theory of cognitive development is based on a social interactive view of learning. Therefore, knowledge is in fact socially constructed, and Vygotsky recognized that ideas have social origins; they are constructed through communication with others. He further assumes that the process of assisting students by instructors and peers to advance from a level to another beyond their ZPD is called scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976).

2.3. Process approach to EFL writing instruction

After a long focus on the product-based approach to writing in educational institutions, curriculum design has been aimed at for writing process rather than its product. Consequently, EFL instructors can activate schemata for their students' topics through prewriting and planning activities (Anderson, 2003). In this stage, they are to produce their ideas as a starting point in order to decide what to write about, so they can organize their ideas appropriately. These activities enable the students to explore topics in an unstructured and non-threatening way before they work on their paragraphs or essays.

Process writing is an approach that requires focusing on the process by which the students produce their written products rather than on the products themselves. Brown (2001) states that writing is a thinking process, and students produce their final written product based on their thinking process. Moreover, a significant feature of the process approach to writing is that students collect and produce ideas before finishing the actual writing (Zamel, 1982). Process approach encourages them to feel free to convey their own thoughts or feelings in written messages. However,   the process approach has been criticized because it views the process as the same for all writers, regardless of what is being written and who is doing the writing, and because it gives insufficient importance to the purpose and social context of the piece of writing (Badger and White, 2000).

2.4. Genre-based approach to writing instruction

Swale (1990) further defines a genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p. 58). It is an approach to writing which is based on models and key features of texts that pay much attention to their purpose and audience. in the genre approach, samples of a specific genre are introduced to grasp some distinctive characteristics of a given genre: academic, creative and business. Therefore, EFL students are expected to decide their texts" audience and purpose at early stages of writing. The genre approach are that it acknowledges that writing takes place in a social situation and is a reflection of a particular purpose, and it understands that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis (Badger and white, 2000). As Bhatia (1993) suggested, it is important for writing teachers to connect these two elements in order to help students understand how and why linguistic conventions are used for particular rhetorical effects. Though the genre approach is essential, it underestimates the skills required to produce content, and the other concern is that it neglects learners' self-sufficiency (Byram, 2004).

2.5. A process-genre approach to teaching EFL writing

Combination is vital in covering weaknesses and strengths of the approaches. Badger and White (2000) affirms that this dual approach works effectively. For this reason, the process-genre-based approach holds in the writer teaching the appropriate language along with using a set of revision processes by which a final draft can be produced. This combined approach ensures that the writing task is judged from both the viewpoint of writer and of readers at the same time.

In the meantime, writing teachers should coach directly their students on the subject of writing strategies. If they explain the way prewriting can develop outline strategies for the drafting and revision processes, EFL students will be more successful in their writing class. This combined means appears the need for linking all the actors of writing process: writer, reader, teacher/instructor, inside and outside the classroom. writing teachers should incorporate the rest of communication skills: listening, speaking and reading skills in writing class. Putting together these four skills endorse the development of EFL students" communicative capability (Goodman, 1986). The process-genre-oriented approach makes this practical. As background material is read during prewriting activities, speaking and listening occur during presenting lectures and when giving or receiving feedback.

2.5.1. Steps of process-genre approach in EFL writing

According to (Badger and White, 2000), the process-genre writing approach incorporates six (6) stages:

Preparation

The teacher begins preparing the students to write by defining a situation that will require a written text and placing it within a specific genre.

Modeling and reinforcing

In this step, the teacher introduces a model of the genre and lets students consider the social purpose of the text, including who the audience will be.

Planning

Many meaningful activities activate the students' schemata about the topic, including brainstorming, discussing, and reading associated material. The aim is to help the students develop an interest in the topic by relating it to their experience.

Joint constructing

The teacher and students work together to begin writing a text. While doing so, the teacher uses the writing processes of brainstorming, drafting, and revising. The students contribute information and ideas.

Independent constructing

Students undertake the task of composing their own texts on a related topic; so that the teacher is available to help, clarify, or consult about the process. The writing task can be continued as a homework assignment.

 Revising

Students may check, discuss, and evaluate their work with fellow students, as the teacher again guides and facilitates. The teacher may make an effort to publish the students' work, which will impart a sense of achievement and motivate the students to become better writers.

2.6. Analysis of genre moves and strategies

Bhatia elaborates on the genre definition of John Swales (1981, 1985 and 1990) in the following way:

Genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s) (Bhatia, 1993: 13).

Moves are essentially rhetorical, whereas strategies are motivated by non-linguistic considerations. Swale (1990: 141) uses the term step instead of strategy. Therefore, moves can make a significant different in the status of genres. Above all, it is understood that analysis of genre moves and steps in the student's essays is worth mentioning and vital.

METHODOLOGY
3.1. Design of the Study

The research design was based on a quasi-experimental design. The researchers wanted to find out if one variable, the independent variable, can cause changes in another variable, the dependent variable. This makes possible that the change in the dependent variables is primarily caused by the independent variable.

3.2. Participants of the study and Sampling Technique

The total population from which the samples were selected includes 300 grade 11 students of the school registered in 2009 e.c. academic year. The students were grouped in to 6 sections. From this, section *A* and *G* were selected as the researcher was assigned to teach these sections only from 11th grade. Consequently, section *A* students (n= 42) were under experimental group and section *G* students (n=41) were under controlled group via random sampling technique. All the students available in those sections were taken as participants of the study.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of participants

Variables		Experimental group(N=42)	Control group (N=41)	Total
Age (mean)	17-19	32	33	65
	20-22	6	5	11
	Above 22	4	3	7
Sex	Male	22	20	42
	Female	20	21	41
Absentees	One day	4	6	10
	2-4 days	2	3	5
Grade level	-	11	11	-
Stream	-	Natural science	Natural science	-

3.3. Instruments of data collection

There were two more important issues examined in this study. The first main data collection instrument in this study was a test. One and the same writing title was administered for both pre-post intervention tests.

Interview
Interview was also used to explore the perception of experimental students up on the effectiveness of process-genre approach of writing skill. Thus, the interview method was used in this research to provide supporting or supplementary information on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the intervention; the practicability of the procedures of the intervention; satisfaction of an individual's experience and the willingness to take part some other interventions in the future.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure
A pre-test was administered before the treatment had been given for both EG and CG in order to decide whether the two groups were at the same level of writing proficiency or not. After the two-month and half intervention, a post-test was administered to examine the effects of the intervention. This was done to check whether there was significant difference or not.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis
The experimental students' score in the pre-post tests were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics compared to control group. Independent samples *t*- test was employed to compare test scores of the two groups at the pre-post test and a paired samples *t*-test for inter group comparison. SPSS version 20 was used to calculate the *t*-tests. The data which was collected via interview was analyzed based on qualitative means of data analysis.

3.6. Materials used during the intervention
Grade 11 students' text book and teacher's guide edited in 2002 were used in teaching writing for both EG and CG.

4. RESULTS
Table4. 1. Independent samples *t* test for pre-test scores for CG and EG

		N	Mean	Std. D	Mean Difference	*T*	P
pre-test	CG	41	17.0366	4.65214	.84611	.775	.440
	EG	42	16.1905	5.26488			

Before the intervention, the score of control group (CG=17.04, SD=4.65) was slightly higher than the experimental group'(EG=16.19, SD=5.26). The mean difference was .846. But, the independent samples *t*-test revealed no statistically significant difference between the scores of CG and EG, (*t* =.775, df=81, p.>.05). Therefore, it is inferred that the CG and EG were almost the same in their writing ability.

Table4. 2. Independent samples *t*- test for post-test scores for CG and EG

		N	Mean	Std. D	Mean Difference	*T*	P
post-test	CG	41	17.51	8.820	.609	5.093	.000
	EG	42	21.1190	4.46022			

Hence, the mean score of the CG=17.51, SD=8.82 and the mean score of EG= 21.12, SD=4.46, a mean difference of 3.609. The independent samples *t* test revealed that there was statistically significant difference between the scores of CG and EG, (independent *t*-test: *t* = 5.093, df=81, p. <.05) after the intervention had been made.

Table4. 3. A paired samples *t*-test comparing over all pre and post test essay scores of both the EG and CG

	N	Mean	Std. D	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	T	p
pre-test EG	42	16.1905	5.26488	.81239			.000
post-test EG	42	21.1190	9.06670	1.39902	4.9285	7.875	
pre-test CG	41	17.0366	4.562	.727			
post -test CG	41	17.51	4.46	.697	-0.4734	1.420	.163

It was hypothesized that *"Students who are taught by process-genre approach will show greater pre to post intervention im*provement in writing than students who are taught by a traditional approach." Then, 42 students from the experimental EG group completed both pre-post tests. The findings indicated a significant difference between the pre- post test scores in this group (t =7.875,df=41,p. <.05). The mean of the total score obtained by each student in the experimental EG group in the pre-test was 16.19, and the standard deviation was 5.26, whereas the post-test mean was 21.11 and the standard deviation was 9.067 with a mean difference 4.9285 is therefore evident that the students obtained higher scores for their written essays after involvement in the process-genre writing classes.

In the same way, 41 students from the control group completed both pre- post tests. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the pre-post test scores in this group (t = 1.42,df=40,P>.05). The mean of the total score obtained by each student in the control CL group in the pre-test was 17.04, and the standard deviation was 4.56, whereas the post-test mean was 17.51 and the standard deviation was 4.46 with a mean

difference -0.47. Thus, finding implies that there was no significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores in this group (p. >.05). In line with this finding, students who are taught by process-genre approach show greater pre-to-post intervention improvement in argumentative writing skill unlike the control group.

4.2. Discussion

The results of the major findings were presented in the previous section. Moreover, this part discusses the findings in relation to some studies.

4.2.1. Effects of process-genre approach on Students' argumentative writing skill

The effect of the process-genre approach on writing skills of students was examined by interpreting the statistical analysis shown in the previous section. It was hypothesized that students who are taught by process-genre approach will show greater pre- post intervention improvement in producing argumentative writing than students who are taught by a traditional approach.

The independent samples *t*-test at the pre-intervention phase revealed that there was no significant difference between the EG and CG. In spite of this, the same test in the post intervention phase was an evident to see significant difference between writing test scores of the EG and CG; as a result of, process-genre writing instruction. Thus, the results of EG had significant improvement, and higher than the CG. The EG improvement resulted from implementation of process-genre approach during the intervention session.

Students who were taught via process-genre approach showed greater pre-post intervention improvement on their writing test score than did their comparison. This is highly consistent with Hogue (1999: 3), a good writing skill will not appear at once, meaning that writing skill needs a certain process and collaboration of some individuals. For this research, when learners experience lessons provided with the process-genre approach, they actively involved in joint construction, individual task, revising…etc.

On the other hand, the students in CG showed no improvement in their writing test result, this is because they were not exposed to the process-genre writing approach. Here, one can understand that a process-genre approach of writing skill is invaluable for developing students' writing skill. To support this reality, Jarunthawatchai (2010), stated that students who are not taught by process-genre approach have been faced for problems in various dimensions of writing skill.

This finding consolidates the idea that "language helps individuals to build new strategies when they speak with others or even with themselves what Vygotsky termed as the "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in which the highest point of difficulty to solve a problem independently only with the assistance of experienced adults or capable peers." In connection to this, those who were helped each other (EG) showed significant improvement in all areas of writing skill and vice-versa.

4.2.2. Use of moves and steps

The first research question was about the incorporation of rhetorical moves and steps of experimental group EG students. Concerning this core but difficult issue in the process of writing an essay, students gain awareness about rhetorical moves and steps despite how they can keep it in their essay becomes another challenge. As far as the researcher's assessment is concerned, most post-writing test essays pointing that effort was made in employing rhetorical moves and steps within their essay. To particularize, they tried to begin writing with relatively more general idea which can be developed latter in the body in contrast from the pre-writing test. Furthermore, most students began their essay with what other people say about the issue and then they tried to come to their position. They also used some more transitional devices which show their move from part to part. Moreover, they mentioned a number of reasons to support their claim despite almost all were personal. This is to say that citing scientific facts in some way were their main problem. This is consistent with Dawit's (204:245) assertion that "appealing to an authority was not seen at all. It means students lacked the skill of connecting arguments to literature".

4.2.3. Perception of students' towards the effectiveness of process-genre approach

The second research question of the study was perception of experimental students on the effectiveness of the process-genre writing instruction. Students of EG were convinced to say that the intervention with process-genre approach was appropriate and acceptable. This means the students perceive that the intervention was effective. They believe it was important in enabling them see their mistake when they revise their work or via a comment from their peers; as well, they are motivated to write. This was because the writing class based on process-genre instruction helps students to practice writing through passing various stages. Students stated that all the procedures incorporated in the instruction were practical. Moreover, they were satisfied and they were very happy in participating with similar intervention program in the future. Broadly speaking, EG students result significantly changed from pre-post intervention program and this vividly shows that the intervention with process-genre approach is effective.

5. Conclusion

Conclusions drawn from this study show that process-genre instruction is a helpful way to enhance writing ability of students. Students have got better awareness for whom, for what reason and in what way can they produce their

text. It was practically shown that the process-genre writing enables students to have understanding about the rhetorical moves and steps should be incorporated in their writing. Student's perception was positively affected after they involved in the process-genre writing class. In short, it is proved that a class accompanied by process-genre approach was appropriate when someone finds him/her self as writing is very difficult.

To end with, an EFL teacher is expected to be knowledgeable about the process-genre instruction and its purpose, and they should be technical enough in selecting appropriate model essays including good language resources. Thus, further research is recommended to investigate the effects of the process-genre based writing instruction from different perspectives as an instructional technique in EFL writing classroom by extending the intervention time.

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