

APPLICATION OF THE PROCESS GENRE APPROACH FOR IMPROVING WRITING

By
Fadhliatul Ghina *

University of Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh

ABSTRACT

This study intended to find out if there was a significant difference in writing ability between students who were taught writing using the Process Genre Approach (PGA) and those who were taught writing using the teacher's usual approach. Two classes were taken using random sampling, one for the experimental group (EG) and the other for the control group (CG), with 24 students in each group from eleventh graders in Nurul Ulum MA Peureulak. Data, from the results of pre-tests and post-tests, was collected for quantitative analysis of the students' writing abilities. The results from the analysis showed that the mean of the post-test scores from the EG was 67 whilst that from the CG was 53. The results from the t-test showed that the students who were taught using the PGA performed significantly better in writing than those who were taught the standard way. Analysis of the students' writing ability showed more than 20 % improvement in four aspects of writing: organization, structure/grammar, content/idea and mechanics. The EG achieved significant improvement in all aspects of their writing ability than the CG so we can conclude that using the PGA can improve EFL writing ability more than present standard teaching-learning for EFL writing.

Key words: *Process Genre Approach, Teaching Writing.*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the foreign languages taught formally in high schools as a compulsory subject. The purpose of teaching EFL is to

* Corresponding author: fadhliatulghina@yahoo.co.id

enable students to express, communicate, and respond to ideas and feelings in English. Based on the curriculum for Senior High Schools to achieve the standard competency (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, [Depdiknas], 2006: 308), one of the objectives of English is that the students are expected to be able to develop competency of communication in oral and written forms to achieve an informational literacy level. The objective above for English means that, when students graduate they should be able to communicate by speaking and also by writing in English.

Basically writing, as one of the important elements in teaching EFL in senior high school classrooms, has become a valuable tool for engaging students in thinking, showing understanding, creating ideas, communicating, and learning. Furthermore, the goal of teaching writing to senior high school students; as stated in the new competency based curriculum (Depdiknas, 2006: 319) is that senior high school students are expected to be able to express meaning in short functional texts and simple essays in the form of day-to-day narratives, spoofs and analytical expositions, as reflected in the sentence: *“Mengungkapkan makna dalam tek fungsional pendek dan esei berbentuk narrative, spoof dan analytical exposition dalam konteks kehidupan sehari-hari”*.

Nevertheless, although writing sometimes seems easy, for most people its process is not an easy task especially when it is EFL. EFL writing is challenging for some people, especially for novice writers or those who do not know how to produce good writing. It needs ideas and ways to develop them into sentences, paragraphs and essays.

Writing EFL is not an easy job. Based on a preliminary study conducted on February 24th, 2014, the researcher found that more than 60% of the second grade students at Nurul Ulum SMA Peureulak in Aceh Timur had difficulties in writing, especially in writing narrative, spoof and analytical exposition texts. They had difficulty writing sentences with good grammar and organizing the content of a paragraph. The lack of sufficient practice caused them to have difficulty in constructing sentences. This could be seen from their mistakes in elaborating their ideas and arranging them into a good paragraph. On the other hand, the students had difficulty expressing their arguments in analytical exposition writing. After the writer checked the students' writing tasks, she found that the results were poor. They could only get scores around 60 or 70 in the writing test which is below the minimum passing grade.

From the teachers' side, they also rarely used any special technique, approach or method to improve the students' ability when teaching writing. During the writing programs in the classroom, the teacher only asked the students to write freely without teaching them what to write and/or how to write. The teaching-learning did not start from collecting and organizing ideas commonly called brainstorming, followed by clustering, reviewing and editing (Raimes, 1983: 10). Sometimes a writing activity was given just as a task to do because the teacher was absent or unable to come to the class, and the students' writing was rarely corrected, or if it was the corrections just focused on grammar and spelling. Content, purpose, and the form of the text were usually ignored by the teachers. Therefore, the students rarely produced any good pieces of writing with a certain aim and character.

Based on the above, the writer had a discussion with the English teachers in the school. They then decided to change the way of teaching by applying a teaching approach that provides more opportunities for all students to learn how to write better EFL. The approach chosen was the Process Genre Approach (PGA). The PGA is the combining of the process and the genre approach. This approach as stated by Badger and White (2000: 27) allows students to study the relationship between the purpose and the form for a particular genre as they use recursive processes of prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. By using these steps, the teacher can develop students' awareness of different text types and of the composing process. They suggest that the teaching procedure for the Process Genre Approach be divided into six steps: (1) preparation, (2) modeling and reinforcing, (3) planning, (4) joint constructing, (5) independent constructing, and (6) revising. These steps are the unison between the elements of the process and the genre approach.

The Problem for this Research

Based on the key issues presented above, the main question of this study is formulated as follows: "Will the students taught by using the Process Genre Approach achieve a better performance in writing than those who are taught by using the conventional approach?"

The Objective of this Research

The main objective of this study is basically to find out whether students who are taught by using PGA will perform better in writing than students taught using the conventional approach.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is a similar performance in writing proficiency from students taught using the PGA and those taught using the conventional approach.

Ha: There is a better performance in writing by students taught using the PGA than those taught using the conventional approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is one of the skills in English usually used for communication in which the messages are delivered in a written form. According to Bram (2006: 7), to write means to produce or reproduce written messages. Before we write, we need to determine what to write; we should have something meaningful to convey. Still according to Bram (ibid: 25), when dealing with writing, we make the best use of sentences to express our messages. When we write, we intend to interact with our readers using written language. Brown (2007: 335) states that the written product is often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require specialized skills which not every speaker develops naturally. Writing needs thinking that focuses students on how to generate and express ideas.

Hogue and Oshima (1997: 2) state that writing takes study and practice to develop the skills. For both native speakers and new learners of EFL, it is important to note that writing is a process, not a product.

Writing is a progressive activity. It means that when students write something down the first time, they have already thought about what they are going to say and how they are going to say it. Then after students finish writing, they can read over what they have written and make changes and corrections. Therefore, writing is never a one-step action; it is a process that has several steps. Many students say that writing is a difficult skill. But it is actually an easy and enjoyable activity if there is an appropriate method and an interesting teaching technique.

Stages of Writing

According to Hogue and Oshima (1997: 4), the writing process can be divided into four stages:

1. **Prewriting** is the first stage of the writing process and includes all the things to do before starting to write out the first version of the text. Prewriting is selecting what topic to write about and narrowing

the topic to a particular aspect of that general subject (Oshima & Hogue, 2000: 4). It includes exploring the topic, choosing the topic, and beginning to gather and organize details before starting to write.

2. **Planning** is a systematic process of developing ideas and giving them shape. As the first stage in the writing process, planning is a series of strategies designed to find and formulate information in writing (Trimmer, 1984: 25).
3. **Drafting** is a procedure for making a preliminary sketch in writing. It is a series of strategies designed to organize and develop a sustained piece of writing (Trimmer, 1984: 70). Drafting involves getting ideas down on paper in roughly the format intended for the finished work. When one identifies several subjects and gathers information on the subjects from different perspectives, he or she needs to select one subject, organize the information into meaningful clusters, and then discover the links that connect the clusters.
4. **Revising** is a procedure for improving writing in progress. It is probably the most important stage of the writing process. "Revision may require recollecting ideas or information, changing or improving organization and it also includes editing: fixing spelling, improving awkward sentences, changing word choices, changing punctuation, and correcting mechanics" (Trimmer, *ibid*: 85).

The Process Genre Approach

The Process Genre Approach is a combination of the process and the genre approaches. This new approach is a model for teaching writing experiments proposed by Badger and White (2000: 157) due to the weakness of the genre approach noted above. They affirmed through their research that this dual approach works well if the writing cycle begins with models, descriptions of the key linguistic features, discussion of the social situation in which it happens, and analysis of the recommended rhetorical patterns of each genre. Students' writing is then subjected to the sequence of drafts in the process approach.

This approach allows students to study the relationship between purpose and form for a particular genre as they use the recursive processes of prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. Using these steps develops students' awareness of different text types and of the composing process (Badger & White, *ibid*: 158). In addition, they present an example when a school student creates an advertisement

describing his or her used laptop in order to sell it, so the following things should be considered. This writing is intended to sell the laptop. It should be attractive to some people who are interested in buying it. It must have certain information and it should follow the traditions for description used when a laptop is offered for sale. Then, the person should follow the procedures for drafting, revising and editing as well as using rhetorical language skills which are best suited to this genre.

Teaching Procedures for the Process Genre Approach in Teaching Writing

Typically, the teaching procedures using PGA are divided into the following six steps: (1) preparation, (2) modeling and reinforcing, (3) planning, (4) joint constructing, (5) independent constructing and (6) revising as described by Yan (2007: 1). These six steps are described as follows.

1. 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, such as a persuasive essay arguing for and against an issue of current interest. This activates schemata and allows students to anticipate the structural features of this genre.
2. Modelling 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. For example, the purpose of an argumentative essay is to persuade the reader to act on something. Next, the teacher discusses how the text is structured and how its organization is developed to accomplish its purpose. The students may make some comparisons with other texts to reinforce what they have learned about this particular genre.
3. Planning. In this step many meaningful activities activate students' schemata about the topic including brainstorming, discussing, and reading associated material. The aim is to help the students to develop an interest in the topic by relating it to their past experiences.
4. Joint constructing. In this step the teacher and the students work together to start writing a text. While doing so, the teacher uses the writing processes of brainstorming, drafting, and revising. The students contribute information and ideas, and the teacher writes the generated text on the board or in a computer. The final draft provides a model for students to refer to when they work on their own individual compositions.

5. Independent constructing. At this stage students have examined model texts and have jointly constructed a sample text in the genre. They now undertake the task of composing their own texts on a related topic. Class time can be set aside for students to compose independently so that the teacher is available to help, clarify, or consult with them individually about the process. The writing task can be continued as a homework assignment.
6. Revising. Students will eventually have a draft that will then undergo final revision and editing. This does not necessarily mean that the teacher has to collect all the papers and mark them one by one. Students may check, discuss, and evaluate their work with fellow students i.e. use peer evaluation, as the teacher again guides and facilitates.

Analytical Exposition Texts

Analytical exposition text is one genre that focuses on analyzing texts or issues. Hartono (2005: 20) states that an analytical exposition is a text focusing on persuasion by presenting an argument. The generic structure of an analytical exposition text consists of the following structures:

- a. Thesis: introducing the topic and indicating the writer's position. The writer also outlines the main argument to be presented.
- b. Arguments: setting out a series of information and arguments that support the thesis.
- c. Reiteration/Summary: in this stage, the writer restates and summarises his point of view.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

An experimental design was used in this study to find out the effect of the Process Genre Approach for teaching writing. Experimental research is conducted in order to predict a phenomenon or to explain some kind of cause by manipulating a variable(s). McMillan (2008: 218) states that the aim of experimental research is not only to collect and describe data but also to find out the cause and effect.

Therefore, there are two variables in this study: (1) the dependent variable is the students' writing ability; and (2) the independent variable is the Process Genre Approach (PGA). The independent variable is the treatment for the experimental group (EG) which is

directly caused by the researcher for the purpose of determining the effect on the dependent variable. The effect that the researcher was interested in was the students' writing ability. Meanwhile, a standard teaching approach for writing was used with the control group (CG). The study was aimed to prove whether or not the students who got the PGA treatment achieved a better performance than the students who got the standard approach.

Population and Samples

Population

The usual purpose of educational research is to learn about a large group of people by studying a much smaller group of people. "Population is the largest groups we wish to learn something about" (Borg and Gall, 1989: 213). The target population of this study was all 83 second grade (year 11) students in three classes at Nurul Ulum MA (Madrasah Alia) Peureulak Aceh Timur.

Samples

One class with 24 students was chosen at random as the EG. Another class, also with 24 students, was also chosen at random as the CG.

Location of the Research

This research was done at the Nurul Ulum Madrasah Alia or private Islamic High School in Peureulak, Aceh Timur because she wanted to study the use of the PGA as an approach for teaching writing. Research about teaching writing using the PGA had never before been done at Nurul Ulum Peureulak and the English teacher supported this study.

Data and Sources of the Data

To collect the data for this research study the researcher used tests. She gave a pre-test to both groups on the same day but at different times. In teaching writing to the EG the researcher used the PGA as the treatment.

In the first meeting, the researcher gave a pre test to each class to find out the writing ability of each student at the outset of the study. In this test, the students were given some topics about interesting issues at their school such as football as a popular sport. Each student must choose one topic to write a paragraph about; an analytical exposition text eight to eleven sentences (100-150 words) in length. The time allocation for the test was 180 minutes, 90 minutes for the EG and 90

minutes for the CG. In the second meeting, the researcher as the teacher of the experimental class used the PGA (Process Genre Approach). Firstly, she gave material to the students to introduce analytical exposition paragraphs with their generic structure, emotive words, present simple tense and she introduced the PGA.

There are several steps in the PGA for teaching-learning writing. The first step was preparation; the teacher opened the class with a greeting and explained about the material that was to be learned. Then she divided the students into groups of four. The second step was modeling and reinforcing, the teacher distributed a sheet about analytical exposition texts to the students and asked them to read and answer the questions. Then, the teacher asked the students to focus on the generic structure (thesis, argument and reiteration) for the analytical exposition genre. The third step was planning, after the students had read the tasks. The teacher asked the leader of each group to share their ideas to all the members of the class. Here, the topic for discussion was “the importance of the English language”. After that, she explained more about analytical exposition texts. Then, she asked the students to give her a suitable title for the task and she wrote the keywords ‘international language’ on the board. Next, the students gave their suggestions for a title using these words.

The fourth step was joint constructing. In this step, the students discussed ideas about the words ‘international language’ grouping the ideas using brainstorming. Next, the teacher wrote the students responses on the board and guided them to produce an analytical exposition text writing together. The fifth step was independent construction; the students began to write their own individual texts. The last step was revising, when the students finished their writing. The teacher asked them to revise their texts working in pairs. These revisions focused on mechanics, punctuation and capitalization not content or ideas.

Similar activities were also conducted in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth meetings. After the last meeting of teaching using the PGA with the EG, the post-test was given to both groups. The aim of this test was not only to measure the progress of the students but also to find out the post-test result. That is to find out whether the PGA can produce a better result than the conventional teaching-learning approach. The test which was given for the post-test was the same as the test that was given for the pre-test.

Research Instruments

The instrument used to collect the data for this research was a set of tests, a pre-test and a post-test.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researcher used quantitative analysis. The data analysis was conducted by organizing the data from the pre-tests and the post-tests. Based on these results, the researcher made a frequency distribution table and then analyzed the data to get the mean, the variance, the standard deviation, and the t-test results.

The mean was used to find the average scores of the classes. Sudjana (2002: 67) says the formula for the “mean” is:

$$\text{Mean} = \bar{x} = \frac{\sum X}{n}$$

According to Sudjana (2002: 94), standard deviation is used to investigate the variability in the results. The formula is:

$$s^2 = \frac{n \sum x^2 - \left(\frac{\sum x}{n} \right)^2}{(n-1)}$$

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

As this is experimental research, organizing and analysing the research data is a fundamental step and necessary for the purpose of this study.

Table 1. Raw scores from the EG and the CG.

Experimental Group				Control Group		
No	Sample	Score		Sample	Score	
		Pre-Test	Post-Test		Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	A	31	42	Aa	30	46
2	B	50	72	Bb	36	60
3	C	46	65	Cc	40	48
4	D	43	61	Dd	45	50

Table 1 continued...

5	E	46	71	Ee	36	46
6	F	56	73	Ff	34	42
7	G	56	64	Gg	36	52
8	H	43	67	Hh	34	53
9	I	60	81	Ii	38	40
10	J	47	68	Jj	52	65
11	K	40	65	Kk	41	42
12	L	36	60	Ll	45	58
13	M	45	62	Mm	42	56
14	N	52	74	Nn	35	50
15	O	36	63	Oo	60	74
16	P	48	66	Pp	45	58
17	Q	64	78	Qq	42	62
18	R	46	54	Rr	44	45
19	S	45	72	Ss	40	65
20	T	34	57	Tt	41	44
21	U	50	65	Uu	54	66
22	V	48	75	Vv	57	67
23	W	50	67	Ww	35	45
24	X	58	86	Xx	50	60

The raw scores set out above are the results from the tests of writing from both the EG and the CG before and after the PGA treatment was given to the EG.

Results of Independent t-test on Pre-tests of the EG and the CG

The pre-test was given to gain information about the students' writing scores before the treatment was implemented. In this case, the scores were analyzed using the independent t-test to find out whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test results from the EG with those from the CG. As the t-test was smaller than the t-table this showed there was no significant difference in the results from the two groups

Table 2. Results from the Pre-tests from both the EG and the CG.

	EG	S _{gab}	t-test	df	α	t-table	CG
N	24	2.22	1.25	46	0.05	1.68	24
$\bar{x}$	47						44
S ²	67						50
s	8						7

Results of Independent t-tests on Post-tests of both EG and CG

After gathering the data from the post-tests, a similar analysis was done as with the pre-tests. This aimed to find out whether the PGA influenced the students' writing performance. It was specially designed to investigate whether the students taught using the PGA got significantly better results than those taught using the teacher centered method.

Table 3. Result from the Post-tests from both the EG and the CG.

	EG	S_{gab}	t-test	df	α	t-table	CG
N	24	2.69	4.8	46	0.05	1.68	24
$\bar{x}$	67						53
S^2	84						90
s	9						9

As t-test was larger than t-table this showed that there was a significant improvement in the results from the EG with the PGA treatment compared to the results from the CG.

Discussions

The first discussion is about the results from the t-test analysis. Having calculated the mean scores of the pre-test results for both the EG and the CG, the difference between these mean scores was compared by doing an independent sample t-test. From Table 2 above, the mean pre-test score from the EG was 47 while that from the CG was 44. When the mean scores of the two groups are compared through the independent sample t-test, the result of the t-test was 1.25 while the result of the t-table at the confidence level 0.05 was 1.68. Thus t-test was lower than t-table. This result indicated that there was no significant difference between the results from both groups. In other words, the EG and the CG were the same in terms of their initial ability in writing.

Then, the same procedure was done with the post-test scores. From Table 3, the mean of the post-test scores from the EG was 67 while that from the CG was 53. When the two means are compared through the independent sample t-test as shown in Table 3, it shows that the result of the t-test was 4.8, while the result from the t-table at the confidence level 0.05 was 1.68. Thus the differences between the two means was significant since t-test exceeded t-table. Therefore, the students who were taught by using the PGA performed significantly better in writing

than those who were taught using the conventional approach. This result is similar to results from previous studies conducted by Nurhasanah (2004) where the post-test results were significantly higher than both the pretest results and the results from the control groups.

The second discussion is related to what aspects of writing were performed better by the students in this study after the PGA treatment. The results showed that the EG made significant improvements in four aspects of writing viz: organization, content/ideas, structure/grammar and mechanics.

Based on the results, all aspects of writing including organization, content/idea, grammar/structure and mechanics were improved. The aspect of writing that improved the most was structure and the lowest was organization. The structure aspect was highly improved because the students worked in groups and got assistance from their pair partners about mistakes in their writing. In this study the aspect that improved the least was the aspect of organization. This may have been caused by difficulty in writing good sentences for important ideas. Also, the students usually wrote without using a good topic sentence to provide direction.

In fact, learning writing using the PG approach is easy to understand. It made the students very active in their groups and in discussions, sharing ideas with their friends. This is what Yan (2001) also found, the PGA approach makes this feasible, as background material is read during the prewriting activities. Then, through this approach, the students were directed to find out the schematic structure and the language features of an analytical exposition text. Next, another advantage of the PGA is that most of the students were actively involved, both doing group work, pair work and individual work. In addition, the teaching-learning process using the PGA for writing helped the students to share their ideas with their friends in their groups before writing their own individual texts. This gave them a lot of information about the topic that they had to write about.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

After conducting the research and analyzing the data as set out above, two main conclusions can be drawn on what has been found out about the application of the Process Genre Approach for improving students' writing ability; they are: (1) the students who were taught

using the PGA got higher scores than those who were taught with the conventional approach, (2) the EG had significant improvement in their writing proficiency in four aspects viz: organization, content/idea, structure/grammar and mechanics. These main points are discussed below.

First, according to the findings, the students taught using the PGA got better results in writing compared to those who were taught with the conventional approach.

Second, the results also showed that there was much improvement in various aspects of writing from the EG students in particular in organization, content/idea, structure and mechanics. This can be seen from the percentage of students' proficiency before and after teaching writing by using the PGA. The first aspect organization increased 17 %, the second aspect - content/ideas rose 21 %, the next structure/grammar went up 22 %, and the last aspect mechanics went up 21 %. Thus, from all aspects there was an increase overall of 20% with the biggest improvement in the grammar/structure aspect with an increase of 22 %.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusions above, the Process Genre Approach is more effective to improve the writing skills of Senior High School students than the conventional approach for teaching-learning writing. Therefore, the researcher would like to offer some suggestions to other EFL teachers and other researchers.

To teachers, EFL teachers at Senior High Schools should use the PGA as an alternative for teaching language to improve students' writing and students' proficiency in EFL writing skills. Teaching EFL is not easy; teachers must always be creative and should use new approaches or methods for teaching especially methods appropriate to the situation, the topics and the level of education and interest of the students. New approaches should make the students more interested and motivated in the teaching-learning process. Before teachers conduct the teaching-learning processes, they should choose an appropriate approach first. Because the approach is one of the main factors that will affect the success of the teaching- learning process.

To other researchers, the researcher hopes that the finding from this study can be used as one of the starting points for future studies of similar problems. There are too, many other approaches for teaching English that could also be studied to find out their effectiveness for teaching-learning writing when applied to the students.

REFERENCES

- Badger, R., & White, J. (2000). Product, Process and Genre Approaches to Writing. *EAP Journal*, 54(2), 153-160.
- Borg, W., & Gall, M. (1989). *Educational Research* (5th eds.). New York: Longman.
- Bram, B. (2006). *Write Well*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Teaching by Principle: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (4th Eds.). New York: Pearson Education.
- Depdiknas.(2006). *Standar Isi Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Sekolah Menengah Atas*. Jakarta: Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia.
- Hartono, R. (2005). *Genre Based Writing* (Unpublished Masters Thesis). Semarang State University, Semarang.
- Hougue, A. & Oshima, A. (1997). *Introduction to Academic Writing*. New York: Pearson Education.
- McMillan, J. H. (2008). *Educational Research: Fundamental for Customer*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Nurhasanah. (2004). *The Implementation of Process Genre Approach in Teaching Writing* (Unpublised Master's thesis). Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh.
- Raimes, A. (1983). *Technique in Teaching Writing: Teaching Techniques in English as a Second Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sudjana. (2002). *Metode Statistika* (5th eds.). Bandung: Tarsito.
- Trimmer, J. F. (1984). *Writing with A Purpose*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Yan, G. (2007). *English Teaching Forum: A Process Genre Approach Model for Teaching Writing*. Retrieved from <http://exchanes.state.gov/forum/vol43/no3/p18.htm>