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Effect of Process-Genre Approach on Writing Performance among Academic Writing Learners at the University Level in Pakistan

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Abstract

English academic writing learners are taught through the traditional conventional teacher-centred 'product approach' in Pakistan. Consequently, ESL academic students face difficulties including poor writing performance. Badger and white (2000) launched the process genre as an amalgamated teaching writing approach. The quasi-experimental research design was used. Data was collected through Pre and post-tests along with semi-structured interviews from 80 ESL students. Pre and post-tests were assessed according to 'the ESL Composing Profile' comprising "content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics". A Pair sample t-test found a "statistically significant" mean variation in writing performance scores was improved from 55.65 to 75.70 in the experimental group who were taught through PGA. It is concluded that teaching academic writing through PGA helps to improve ESL writing performance among university students in Pakistan.

Key Words: Academic Teaching Writing Approaches, Process-Genre Approach

Introduction

English language is very important as it is used to communicate among different nations of the world. English as a second language is important because it is being used as a lingua franca for both academics and communicative purposes (Ajmal & Humaira, 2020; Nguyen, 2019). In the Pakistani educational context, it is quite evidently highlighted importance of learning English, especially for academic purposes. Academic writing should be taught with appropriate pedagogical approaches (Coleman & Capstick, 2012).

No one can deny the importance of academic writing as an essential part of literacy; thus, it should be carefully taught keeping in mind the difficulties and challenges of the students. The English language enjoys a privileged position in Pakistan. It is one of the official languages and the language of power in Pakistan (Khan, 2012).

ESL academic writing approaches have been different and evolving according to the ESL research in the field during the decades (Abate, 2019). In Pakistan predominately product-based approach is being used to teach ESL academic writing. This conventional product approach has been mentioned in many studies as an inadequate for the development of students and they immensely faced many challenges including poor academic writing performance during their undergraduate studies (Siddique & Singh, 2016).

If we compare the academic writing with other forms of writing, academic writing needs to master (Liu & Ni 2015). Davidson (2018) answers the question regarding features of a good piece of academic writing includes: follow the set of rules and conventions, formal structure, references from the literature to supplement ideas, understanding of theories, causes, processes, alternatives, abstract, intellectual notions/phenomenon, conventional; tone, tenor register, and conventional mechanics of writing. In his discussion about approaches used for teaching academic writing, he stresses the need to reevaluate the traditional approaches to be more functional (Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015).

The different approaches have constraints, and the idea of a mixture is something new in the area. This procedure enables students to observe the organization between "purpose and form as they

make use of the procedures of prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing". Employing these steps builds students' interpretation of the process. The process genre method is split up into: "(1) preparation, (2) modelling and bolstering, (3) Planning, (4) joint constructing, (5) independent construction, and (6) revising" (Badger & White, 2000 cited in Ajmal & Humaira, 2020).

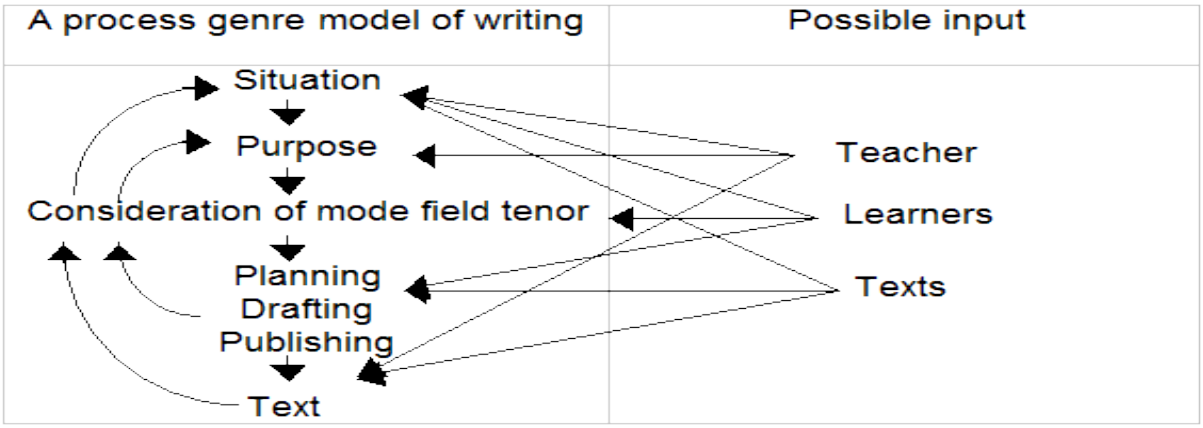

Figure 1. Writing through PGA (Badger & White, 2000)

Material and Methods

Research Design

The "quasi-experimental design" seems like a true experimental design; the only distinction there is the unplanned role of participants of separate sorts. The researcher determines pretest and posttest counts and evaluates the differences among the tests. The researcher observes in comparative research, the changes amongst two or more parties on the research issue that is being investigated (Frey, 2018, p. 3419-3420).

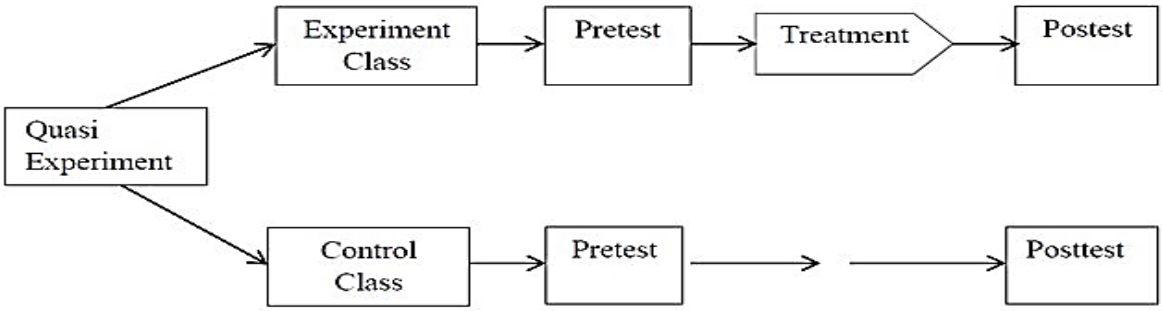

Figure 2. Quasi-experiment group Design (Rudibyani, 2019 p. 2)

The quasi-experimental design of the current research is as:

"Experimental O1 X1 O2

Control O3 X2 O4"

O = observation (1, 3 is the pre-test, and 2, 4 is the post-test)

X1 = the independent variable (treatment teaching writing with the process-genre approach)

X2= teaching writing with a traditional Product Approach

(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

Research Participants

The population of 5500 undergraduate students of the Grand University, Pakistan enrolled for the 2020-21 academic year sample of 80 students and 10 ESL academic writing teachers were selected. Group E4 undergraduates (n= 40) were randomly assigned as "the experimental group" (EG) and Group E5 undergraduates (n=40) were under the "controlled group" (CG). The "convenience sampling strategy" is being observed which requires selecting the easily available subjects to serve as participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

Research Intervention (Treatment)

The experimental class was educated by using the process-genre approach to ameliorate their writing performance. Ten meetings were dedicated to tutoring the crucial notions and expertise. Two most possibly alike instructors were requisitioned to participate in the study and educate 10 weeks writing course to the treatment group (the experimental group) based on the process-genre approach. Assignments were designed by the participating instructors according to the guidelines and certain guidelines and principles (Yalden, 1987). The designed pre and post-tests were communicated with the experienced and after confirmation and suggestions from the specialists were administered with the consent from the involved bodies to experimentation

Data Analysis and Findings

ESL Academic Writing Evaluating

To grade any exam paper, we need a proper rubric and English as a second language ESL composing profile is one of the most widely used rubric in the field of ESL academic writing.

The 'ESL composition profile' is founded on five criteria with distinct values "content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics". Bacha (2001) approves of Jacobs et al.al.1981) has high constructed validity and subsequently its application while evaluating and comparing different learners' writings. In this analysis pre and post-tests were weighed in line with the table 1 evaluation scale.

Table 1

Evaluation Scale Jacobs et al.'s (1981) cited in (Bacha, 2001)

Writing Components	Criteria/ Traits	Score
Content	extent, relevance, subject knowledge	30%
Organization	coherence, fluency, clarity, logical sequencing	20%
Vocabulary	richness, approproiate register, word form mastery	20%
Language Use	accuaracy (a usage of articles, word order, tenses, prepositions, sentence constructions)	25%
Mechanics	paragraphing, spelling, capitaliziation, punctuation	5%

The findings are obtainable to answer the research question. In Table 2 the control group (CG) descriptive statistics is presented and their total scores and subscores. Paired sample statistics related to the control group are presented in table 3 and the paired sample t-test results are shown in Table 2:

Table 2
Control Group (CG) Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test Content 30%	40	12	23	16.67	2.859

Pre-Test Organization 20%	40	6	17	10.70	3.360
Pre-Test Vocabulary 20%	40	7	17	11.38	3.410
Pre-Test Language Use 20%	40	7	19	11.73	2.611
Pre-Test Mechanics 5%	40	1	4	1.98	.800
Pre-Test Total 100%	**40**	**41**	**73**	**53.68**	**7.543**
Post-Test Content 30%	40	12	25	17.42	3.257
Post-Test Organization 20%	40	7	18	12.75	3.288
Post-Test Vocabulary 20%	40	7	18	12.60	3.169
Post-Test Language Use 25%	40	10	22	16.05	2.754
Post-Test Mechanics 5%	40	1	4	2.58	.636
Post-Test Total 100%	**40**	**47**	**76**	**62.40**	**6.621**
Valid N (listwise)	40				

The scores obtained under five sub-sections: "content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics" of writing are shown both tests and it is evident that there is a little improvement in scores with time. Total mean scores obtained by the control group (CG) are 53.68 % on the pre-test and 62.40% on the post-test. Figure 3 visually presents the changes in mean scores of all sub-components among the control group at the pre and post-test stages.

The paired sample t-test is applied to establish the mean difference amongst two sets of findings and to apply paired sample t-test, every participant or individual is measured two times and as a result pairs of observations are processed. Table 3 shows the control group paired samples' means and standard deviation. The Control group's total mean scores are 62.40 at the post-test test and 53.68 at the pretest stage.

Table 3
Control Group Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	**Post-Test Total 100%**	**62.40**	**40**	**6.621**	**1.047**
	Pre-Test Total 100%	**53.68**	**40**	**7.543**	**1.193**
Pair 2	Post-Test Content 30%	17.43	40	3.257	.515
	Pre-Test Content 30%	16.68	40	2.859	.452
Pair 3	Post-Test Organization 20%	12.75	40	3.288	.520
	Pre-Test Organization 20%	10.70	40	3.360	.531
Pair 4	Post-Test Vocabulary 20%	12.60	40	3.169	.501
	Pre-Test Vocabulary 20%	11.38	40	3.410	.539
Pair 5	Post-Test Language Use 20%	16.05	40	2.754	.436
	Pre-Test Language Use 25%	11.73	40	2.611	.413
Pair 6	Post-Test Mechanics 5%	2.58	40	.636	.101
	Pre-Test Mechanics 5%	1.98	40	.800	.127

In this study, the performance earlier and later the intervention was recorded and analyzed by using paired sample t-test. In the table, the t value is 9.558 which means the difference is 8.725 when comparing the posttest total with the pretest total among the control group (CG), which is a statistically significant difference.

Table 4
Control Group Paired Sample T-Test

	Paired Differences						
	Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**

					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	**Post-Test Total 100% - Pre-Test Total 100%**	**8.725**	**5.773**	**.913**	**6.879**	**10.571**	**9.558**	**39**	**.000**
Pair 2	Post-Test Content 30% - Pre-Test Content 30%	.750	2.362	.373	-.005	1.505	2.009	39	.042
Pair 3	Post-Test Organization 20% - Pre-Test Organization 20%	2.050	3.154	.499	1.041	3.059	4.111	39	.000
Pair 4	Post-Test Vocabulary 20% - Pre-Test Vocabulary 20%	1.225	3.317	.524	.164	2.286	2.336	39	.025
Pair 5	Post Test Language Use 25% - Pre Test Language Use 20%	4.325	2.347	.371	3.574	5.076	11.656	39	.000
Pair 6	Post-Test Mechanics 5% - Pre-Test Mechanics 5%	.600	.591	.093	.411	.789	6.426	39	.000

Table 5 presented the results of the experimental group (EG) descriptive statistics and the mean scores of the total along with the sub-components of writing at pre and post-test stages. Figure 4 visually presents the changes in mean scores of all sub-components among the experimental group at the pre and post-test stages.

Table 5
Experimental Group Descriptive Statistics

	N	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Pre-Test Content 30%	40	12	23	16.80	3.082
Pre-Test Organization 20%	40	6	17	10.88	3.156
Pre-Test Vocabulary 20%	40	7	19	11.83	3.720
Pre-Test Language Use 20%	40	10	19	14.08	2.556
Pre-Test Mechanics 5%	40	1	4	2.08	.859
Pre-Test Total 100%	**40**	**42**	**71**	**55.65**	**6.811**
Post-Test Content 30%	40	10	30	22.22	5.010
Post-Test Organization 20%	40	10	19	15.38	2.559
Post-Test Vocabulary 20%	40	9	19	14.25	2.468
Post-Test Language Use 25%	40	14	21	18.35	1.777
Post-Test Mechanics 5%	40	2	5	3.70	.823
Post-Test Total 100%	**40**	**59**	**88**	**75.70**	**6.622**
Valid N (listwise)	40				

Table 6 shows the scores obtained under five sub-components of writing are shown both in pre and post-tests and it is evident that there is a considerable improvement in scores with time. Total mean

scores obtained by the experimental group (EG) are 75.70 % in the pre-test and 55.65 % in the post-test.

Table 6
Experimental Group Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	**Post-Test Total 100%**	**75.70**	**40**	**6.622**	**1.047**
	Pre-Test Total 100%	**55.65**	**40**	**6.811**	**1.077**
Pair 2	Post-Test Content 30%	22.23	40	5.010	.792
	Pre-Test Content 30%	16.80	40	3.082	.487
Pair 3	Post-Test Organization 20%	15.38	40	2.559	.405
	Pre-Test Organization 20%	10.88	40	3.156	.499
Pair 4	Post-Test Vocabulary 20%	14.25	40	2.468	.390
	Pre-Test Vocabulary 20%	11.83	40	3.720	.588
Pair 5	Post-Test Language Use 25%	18.35	40	1.777	.281
	Pre-Test Language Use 20%	14.08	40	2.556	.404
Pair 6	Post-Test Mechanics 5%	3.70	40	.823	.130
	Pre-Test Mechanics 5%	2.08	40	.859	.136

In table 7 the scores have analyzed the changes using a paired sample t-test. The t value is 14.824 which means the difference is 20.05 when comparing the posttest total with the pretest total among the experimental group (EG), which is a statistically significant difference.

Table 7
Experimental Group T-Test Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
		Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**				
					Lower	**Upper**			
Pair 1	**Post-Test Total 100% - Pre-Test Total 100%**	**20.050**	**8.554**	**1.353**	**17.314**	**22.786**	**14.824**	**39**	**.000**
Pair 2	Post-Test Content 30% - Pre-Test Content 30%	5.425	5.715	.904	3.597	7.253	6.004	39	.000
Pair 3	Post-Test Organization 20% - Pre-Test Organization 20%	4.500	3.955	.625	3.235	5.765	7.196	39	.000
Pair 4	Post-Test Vocabulary 20% - Pre-Test Vocabulary 20%	2.425	4.673	.739	.930	3.920	3.282	39	.002
Pair 5	Post Test Language Use 25% - Pre Test Language Use 20%	4.275	2.160	.342	3.584	4.966	12.517	39	.000

Pair 6	Post-Test Mechanics 5% - Pre-Test Mechanics 5%	1.625	.868	.137	1.347	1.903	11.842	39	.000

Conclusion

The research findings establishes that PGA has a statistically significant positive effect on ESL academic writing students' grades. This study findings also support the previous research regarding the efficacy of (Ajmal,2022, Huang & Zhang, 2019, Ajoke, & Shapii, 2019, Abdel-Haq, Atta, & Hammad Ali, 2020, Agusta, & Cahyono, 2017). Internal validity was ensured so that the findings of the study could not possibly be affected by the factors (Frey, 2018). Writing sub-components adopted in this study have been improved after the intervention as compared to the control group.

PGA as an alternative provide chances to the teachers and fellow students to extend their help and support to understand the rhetorical patterns of different genres based on the clear idea of the writing setting, purpose, and audience Consequently, it is maintained that the development in *genre awareness* supported students recognize the "ideational, interpersonal, and textual" (Abate, 2019) meanings which is much needed to write in any particular communicative settings. This study originates that if the PGA is introduced and implemented it can improve student's performance in academic writing. The ESL writing teacher will also get the advantage through PGA as it shifts the focus from the teacher-centred to the student-centred for the growth of communicative language skills which is much needed for lifelong learning. The PGA is based on student-student collaboration and strategies based on ESL teaching instruction.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the study context the research findings reach through quatitative data analysis, it is suggested by the researchers that ESL writing teachers at university level in Pakistan should replace the existing product and process approach with PGA as writing pedagogy. ESL writing teachers must apply the process genre approach in the classes and encougrae students to understand the process of writing from different genres of academic writing.

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