

## TEACHING WRITING SKILL BASED ON PROCESS GENRE APPROACH IN COMMUNITY LEARNING CONTEXT

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### Abstract

Present study aims at examining the adaptation and implementation of Process Genre Approach for the development and enhancement of writing skill of ESL learners in a community learning context in Pakistan. Teaching writing skill in any foreign language is taken very complex and tedious because mostly ESL teachers trail great number of approaches to teach writing. Though Process and Product approaches have dominated the teaching of writing over the last twenty years in ESL classroom, but Genre approach during the last ten years also came out as one of the great effective methods (Swales, 1990; Tribble, 1996). In this connection, present study discusses the relationship between Process approach and Genre approach, and also suggests that a combination of Process and Genre approach called Process-Genre approach, when implemented in letter and spirit in a language class room in Pakistan, can be more productive especially in the perspective of community learning program.

Present study is quantitative in nature comprising 66 participants, who were instructed and taught English writing skill using Process Genre approach, as a part of community learning program. In-class proficiency tests were used as a tool for the purpose of data collection which were later analyzed by the researchers. Results exhibited the effectiveness of implementation of said approach for community learning purpose.

Findings were found showing effectiveness of Process Genre approach at multifarious levels: from learners' target language lexicon learning, to the formulation of correct syntactic patterns and structures. Learners were even found more autonomous in using various writing techniques more creatively and productively.

**Keywords:** Process –Genre approach, adaptation, writing skill, community learning, effectiveness

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has considerably impacted on the use of English throughout the world (Crystal, 2003). Consequently, for an individual to participate actively in the global market, it has become necessary for him/her to develop English writing skills in addition to speaking skills. Writing is often perceived as one of the most challenging aspects of second language (L2) learning and difficulties in writing different types of texts may arise from the fact that writers have to understand the linguistic features of these different text types

(Hyland, 2003b). In addition, it is even harder for L2 learners to write cohesively according to the conventions of a specific academic context (Flowerdew, 2002). In this connection, ESL teachers really necessitate to explore different approaches in order to teach writing skills which are very important in order to get good proficiency in any foreign language. Over the past decade, the genre process approach has won supporters (such as Triple Swales 1990, 1996: 37-57, Gee 1997).

In short, writing is essentially seen as a skill which has to deal with numerous other language skills, like planning, drafting, etc. This language skill also puts emphasis on language competency, like knowledge of the target language structure along with the text rules. This paper offers an insight of both linguistic factors (how various approaches conceptualize writing) and pedagogic aspects (how the approaches conceptualize the process of teaching/learning to write).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Normally, Community Language Learning (CLL) is taken as a model method for effective learning/ teaching. According to Stevick (1980), in CLL the students are determined to learn and teacher plays the role of a facilitator and supports the ESL/EFL learners. In this method every individual is given importance, students and teachers interact with each other. Rodgers (2001) believes that CLL method is actually based on the hypothetical theory that language for social purpose is much different from communication. He thinks that communication is not just about to convey a message from a speaker to a listener. The speaker at the same time may be a listener. Communication itself is not an easy term to understand i.e. it is not just to convey a message from one person to others but it demands proper response and without response or reaction, communication would be considered partial and imperfect.

Although the above given ideas regarding CLL are appreciable but in the given study CLL is not being dealt as a distinctive teaching method rather the implementation of Genre Process Approach is being measured in the context of community learning program. This study discusses the relationship between Process approach and Genre approach and also suggests that a combination of process and Genre approach, called Process-Genre approach, when implemented in letter and spirit in a language class room specified for community learning in Pakistan, can be more projective.

According to Tribble (1996), process approach focuses on writing activities which move the students progressively from the ideas production and generation to the finished text. In process approach writing is seen as purely linguistic skills like drafting and planning and less attention is given to linguistic knowledge like knowledge of grammar or text structure. The writers views vary about the stages of producing a piece of writing, but there is a typical model that identifies four stages like prewriting, composing or drafting, revising and editing. On the other hand, Genre-Approach regards writing as linguistic but, unlike process-approach, it emphasizes the writing in relation to its context in which the piece of writing is produced. So, there are various kinds of writing like sales letters, reports and research articles which have link with different contexts and situations (Flowerdew, 1993). In ESL context, Dudley Evans (1997) proposed three stages in genre approach for writing. Firstly, a particular model of genre is introduced or analyzed then students carry out exercises and lastly they produce a short text.

Process approach is sometimes viewed as an opposite approach to genre approach. Gee (1997) states that process approach represents a reaction against the product approach and genre approach represents some kind of reaction to progressive curriculum. Process Genre Approach is considered to be the best among above discussed approaches. The central point in process-genre approach is that writing is set in with process-genre approach in a social situation. It means a piece of writing always has particular purpose that belongs to a particular situation. A teacher opting process-genre approach in teaching ESL needs to replicate some situation and gives sufficient help to learners in order to identify purpose as well as other social context's aspects. Drawing their knowledge about things like grammar, vocabulary as well as writing organization, writers would use genre skills like re-drafting. Furthermore, for the sake of better linguistic outcome, it is important that language teachers are expert in writing in different genres. Genre approach's key or main feature is that they can draw particular process-genres on the basis of their own knowledge and skills.

According to Rodgers (2001), some of the important features which Process Genre Approach occupies are as under:

- Students are considered as "learner-clients" and the teacher as a "teacher-counselor".
- Grammar and vocabulary are taught inductively.

- Students get more autonomy which contributes to better learning and consequently better linguistic outcome especially in perspective of writing in foreign language.
- A number of different activities can be introduced (for example, a focus on the pronunciation point and grammar mistakes, producing new sentences).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Method

The research employed experimental design, wherein pre-test, post-test research design was furnished. 66 subjects were divided in two identical groups; experimental and controlled and with the help of post test results were drawn. The purpose of this research was to establish the relationship between above discussed variables.

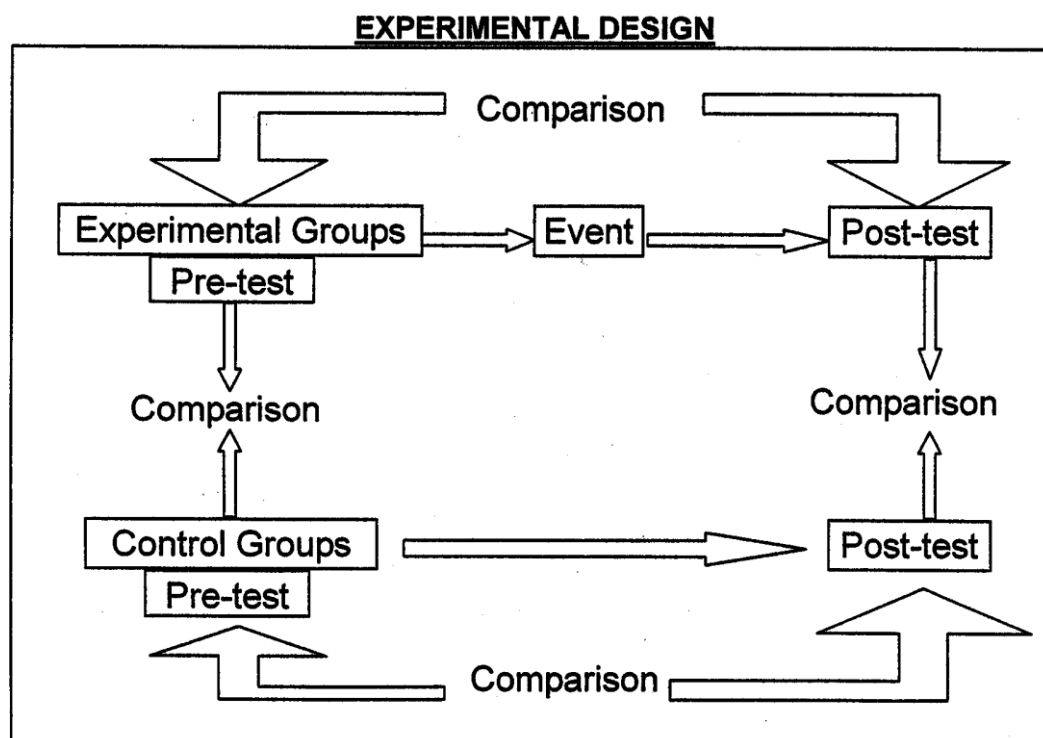


Figure. 1. Framework of research design

#### 3.2. Population

This research population consisted of Lahore Leads University students currently undergoing undergraduate studies. These students were in 4th year of their study. Hence, two groups, each of 33 students, were studied to see the affect and the establishment of process genre approach on the writing skills of students.

#### 3.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

The study utilized random sampling techniques; in which the population of the study was given an equal chance of being selected. Sample size was of 66 participants. To control the effect of extraneous variable following measures were taken: matching, counterbalancing, homogeneity by statistical test.

#### 3.4. Instrumentation

The instruments employed for this study were tests. The pre-test was used as a baseline to assess the students' level of proficiency in terms of writing skill. The paired t-test was conducted to determine the significance of the study.

#### 3.5. Data Analysis

In this study one group was rendered as the control group and the other was the experimental/treatment

group. Pre-tests were performed before learning of courses in English. After the pre-test, the experimental group underwent the treatment for a period of one month which was followed by a post-test. Data of both pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS version 17.0. to determine the existence of a significant difference in students' performance, both experimental and control groups. The significance in the improvement of test performance between the experimental and control groups was also examined. This was the way to maintain results and avoid biasness. To find out the most appropriate results experimental research is the most reliable research design. Pretest-treatment-posttest design helps to collect most valid data of experimental group and of controlled group. Experimental design provides validity and reliability to the findings of the research.

### 3.6. Results

In table 1, the numerical values showed that the average pre-test scores of control group were 37.82%, and post-test mean score was 40.79 percent.

Table 1. Result of achievement in the pre and post-test of control group

Control Group test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
Pre test	33	37.82	12.333	-1.246	32	.222
Post test	33	40.79	14.439			

The results showed that the post-test scores of English language means exceeding the average pre-test scores. The increase in average scores of post test was 2.97 percent. Paired *t* test results were not large ( $t = -1.246$ ,  $DF = 32$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). These results evidently show that there is no significant difference between pre- and post-test in English of the control group performance.

Table 2. Result of achievement in the pre and post-test of experimental group

Experimental group test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Pre test	33	33.97	16.433	-12.111	32	.000
Post test	33	73.82	16.050			

Table 2 showed the results of pre-tests and post-tests for the experimental group. Pre-test means result was 33.97 and 73.82% was of post-test. It shows that the post-test test means score exceeded than the scores of the pre-test of experimental group. It reveals an increase of 39.85% in post test mean score of test. Meanwhile paired *t*-test results were significant in which significant value is less than the alpha (0.05) with  $t = 12.111$ ,  $df = 32$ . These results indicate that there are significant differences between the pre- and post test as per the performance of the experimental group in the English language.

The results of this study indicate that this approach can provide simple and powerful exercise of L2 students in an academic context. The results of this research are particularly effective due to the expansion of the scope and diversity of this approach. Therefore, when subjects of the present study underwent the moves in writing, they exhibited not only improved results but also showed more confidence. Furthermore, this approach gives students a thorough understanding of the characteristics of lexico-grammatical processes of language. This study also aims to determine significant differences in terms of performance in English writing skill between the experimental group and the control group. Therefore, *t*-tests were carried out and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The Result of *t*-test in the performance of the experimental group and the control group in the post test

Experimental & Control group	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Test results	8.789	64	.000	33.030	3.758	25.523	40.538

After doing independent t test analysis test, the results in Table 3 indicated that there was a big difference,  $t=8789$ ,  $df = 64$ ,  $p < 0.05$  between the experimental comprehension and the control group in the post. This showed that the average scores of the experimental group (73.82) overtook the result of the control group (40.79) to a large extent. The average difference in the outcome of the experimental group and the control group was 33.03. It emerges from the above table that there is an improvement which indicates statistically significant differences in the writing skill of students.

#### 4. FINDINGS

The results showed that there is an evident increase in the achievement of students after the adoption of a process approach which offers a kind of learning cycle. This proves that the very technique can help students to improve their performance in the same language apart from profound competency in given language.

There are several factors that play a vital role in increasing the performance of post-test of experimental group. The main factors, leading to an increase in the achievement, are to present the content in the form of animation as well as the process which eventually attracts the attention of students. In addition, this process can help to enhance the understanding of students and retention of information for a longer period. This explains the "double coding" theory (Paivio, 2006). According to this theory, the human cognition system consists of two subsystems: the verbal system and the image system (visual). The words and phrases are generally processed in the verbal system (except for material that is concrete), while the images are processed by the image system and report system. Hence the combination of images/illustration in text is endorsed because of the double encoding memory (compared to a codec). This result is consistent with the concept of Miller in cognitive theory that human short-term memory can remember 5-9 items at once. This is to ensure that the concepts or transmitted content can be encoded by the human mind and stored for later in the long-term memory. Indeed, the spirit of a person's ability in the analysis of information is limited to a particular time.

The other factor is the interactive process which allows students to actively participate and make it more fun learning process. As active learning stimulates healthy competition atmosphere among students and makes classroom activities more meaningful. This is parallel to the learning theory of behavior that indicates that learning is a mechanical process which results from the relationship between the stimulus and response. According to Skinner (in Jamalludin Harun and Zaidatun Tasir, 2003), the impetus given to the person will affect the response of a certain stimulus. This can be seen in the genre approach process where students retain an interest in the subject because of a good style of teaching.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, we may conclude that the use of a process approach, as a kind of teaching technique to improve students' writing skills, is beneficial. Therefore, it should be recommended to lecturers that they must use such a contemporary technique in their classrooms. It is hoped that this study would prove helpful for future teachers for the sake of effective learning and ultimately to improve students' academic performance. This study would serve as a guide and reference in the development of educational tools to promote programs or materials making teaching techniques more compatible with the needs of language learners. These findings would equally be supportive in rendering added value and expertise to the usage of relevant technologies in the field of education.

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