Explicit instruction in an EFL writing class:
A process-genre perspective*

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Kim, Sun-Young and Jiwon Paek. 2020. Explicit instruction in an EFL writing class: A process-genre perspective. *Linguistic Research* 37(Special Edition): 31-57. The present study examined the role of explicit writing instruction in an EFL college writing class from the perspective of a process-genre approach to teaching. To evaluate the effect of explicit instruction on writing improvement, a writing rubric was used, which measured the five areas of writing development such as *'Purpose'*, *'Organization'*, *'Elaboration'*, *'Voice'*, and *'Grammar'*. L2 writing proficiency was used as a unit of analysis to evaluate writing development. Specifically, the students in two proficiency groups were required to perform the set of genre-writing tasks, Narrative and Argumentative essays, under pre-test and post-test conditions. The results showed that explicit instruction under the process-genre approach helped to improve students' writing skills, but the relative effects differed according to L2 writing proficiency. More specifically, the more proficiency group showed the improvement in the four areas of the rubric measures except for *'Grammar.'* On the other hand, the less proficiency group experienced the improvement only in two rubric measures, or *'Organization'* and *'Purpose.'* This indicates the important role of L2 writing proficiency in incorporating a process-genre approach into traditional writing classrooms. This paper argues that L2 proficiency should be considered an essential part of teaching practices under the process-genre approach to writing. **(Mokpo National University · Daegu University)**

Keywords   explicit writing instruction, process-genre approach to writing, writing process, L2 writing proficiency, writing rubric

1. Introduction

Traditionally, teaching and learning in English education tended to be skewed toward reading skill in Korean English classes while L2 proficiency requires communicative competence comprising four language skills including

speaking and listening (Kim 2014). The schooling system, targeted at the university entrance exam, leads a teacher and students to engage in test-driven practices, thus paying less attention to writing practices in L2 English classrooms. As Kwon, Yoshida, Watanabe, Negishi, and Naganuma (2004) argued, lack of competence in writing, perceived by Korean students, is closely related to such washback effect of traditional classes.

However, ignorance of the writing process potentially brings many problems to English classes because students lack communicative competence in writing, which serves as a means of performing academic tasks. Specifically, students need to know how to communicate in writing, generating their own ideas and developing them into writing formats appropriate to a given context. Students in traditional English classes often tended to practice writing focusing on grammatical aspects at the sentence level, thus possessing a limited knowledge on context-based writings such as different writing situations and purposes. In this respect, college writers should have opportunities to engage in writing practices under the process-oriented writing cycle, which recognizes writing as a communicative tool rather than linguistic skills limited at a local level. On the other hand, controlled sentence-based writing, often done in typical EFL classrooms, is likely to play a limited role in improving communicative competence in writing.

The importance of the process-genre approach to writing has been addressed in many studies (Hyland 2007; Pae 2008; Rivers 1987; Swales 1990; Xu and Li 2018). Pae (2008) views writing as a communicative tool connecting a writer and readers and writing practices as a process of conveying what a writer wants to say according to her/his own writing purpose. This was illustrated by Rivers' (1987) work that explored how students, under the process-genre approach, could express their own ideas properly in varying contexts. This finding suggests that students need to practice writing across various genres to enhance their communicative competence. Even low proficient learners need to be exposed to various writing genres to acquire communicative competence needed for effective written communication. In the context of English for Specific Purpose (ESP), Richards and Schmidt (2002: 224) conceptualized a genre as "a type of discourse that occurs in a particular setting, having distinctive and recognizable patterns and norms of organization and structure and particular and distinctive

communicative functions." Under the genre approach, teaching practices tend to focus on providing rhetorical instruction to help students produce proper structures in their writing tasks (Swales 1990). Instructional practices that provide rhetorical structures and linguistic features helps students reproduce their own texts appropriate to a given genre. As Henry and Roseberry (2001) argues, the genre approach helps to enhance confidence in conducting writing tasks properly and accurately. However, typical EFL writers had difficulties in understanding unique linguistic features and communicative purposes associated with a specific genre. For this reason, the genre-specific writing instruction could be an effective teaching approach in that it helps students' writing practices in terms of selecting appropriate words, organizing texts appropriate to purposes, and producing texts required in a particular discourse community.

On the other hand, the passive role of students in writing process instruction is considered a constraint of the genre-based approach (Cheng 2007; Digeyasa 2016; Henry and Roseberry 2001; Lee 2006; Swales 2000). Since this approach requires that students writing according to the model suggested by the teacher, Swales (2000) argues, genre-based instruction tends to constrain students' creative thinking and writing styles during the composing process. The process genre-based approach, combining the genre-based approach with process writing provides ways to activate the dynamic role of students and enables them to engage in several stages of the writing process (Badger and White 2000; Gao 2007; Hyland 2007; Kaur and Chun 2005; Kim and Kim 2005; Xu and Li 2018). More specifically, the process genre-based approach helps students produce their own ideas and composition through each stage of the writing cycle such as pre-writing, drafting, and revision. More importantly, instructional practices done under the process-genre approach provide a wide range of interactional opportunities for students to practice writings through explicit instruction and written or oral feedbacks from a teacher and peers (Cheng 2007; Henry and Roseberry 1998; Lee 2006).

Even though many studies have examined the impacts of instructional practices on writing progress (Cheng 2007; Gillespie and Graham 2014; Graham 2018; Harklau 2002; Kim, Wi, and Kim 2015; Walsh 2004), little attention has been paid to the specific examination of the role of L2 writing proficiency in the process-genre approach to writing. In the context of an EFL writing class, Kim

(2016) showed that college students with a low level of writing proficiency might not be appropriate to engage in text level composition in classes underlying the process-genre approach. She clearly suggested that, to implement teaching practices under this approach, the role of L2 proficiency should be clearly articulated when generalizing the results across students. If writing is perceived as a tool for communication, we as teachers need to know more about how less proficient students generate their ideas and develop written texts appropriate to their communicative purposes (Harklau 2002). As Walsh (2004) and Xu and Li (2018) imply, the explicit teaching done under the process-genre approach can provide guidelines with the writing process deferentially applicable to EFL classrooms.

The present study explores the role of L2 writing proficiency by examining how explicit instruction under the process-genre approach helps to improve writing skills in the context of a college writing class. To measure writing skills for students in each proficiency group, this study uses the writing rubric guided by 'The New England Common Assessment Program' (NECAP) instrument, which assesses writing progress in the five linguistic areas: *Purpose, Organization, Elaboration, Voices, and Grammar/Usage.* Learner differences in terms of L2 proficiency might be a challenge to incorporating the process writing model into traditional EFL writing classrooms. From a social-cognitive perspective (Flower 1994), this paper explores how the process-genre teaching approach helps college writers develop writing skills. The students' writing products are analyzed using a constant comparison method (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, and Coleman 2000), which analyzes students' writing tasks according to the rubric scheme as soon as the first data is collected. Results from this study provide some implications for how L2 writing proficiency should be treated in the process-genre approach to teaching especially in the context of EFL writing classes.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Traditional approaches to L2 writing

Traditionally, the teaching approaches to writing can be broadly classified

into the three categories: product-based, process-based, and genre-based approach. The '*product-based approach*', underlying typical EFL classroom teaching, tends to focus on sentence-level structural features coupled with bottom-up processing, which teaches how to produce coherent and error-free texts. This approach might be effective if students' tasks are limited to producing texts under controlled situations (imitating and copying) or under the framework modelled by a teacher. The reason why many EFL classes employ this product-based teaching is that it helps even novice writers compose texts by reproducing a teacher's framework or a pattern of rhetorical organization suggested by the model. However, this approach provides little information on the process of engaging in writing practices. L2 writers as passive learners do not need to know writing contexts such as 'to whom', 'for what', and 'how to' during the composing process (Kim 2016).

As opposed to the product-based approach, '*process-based approach*' emphasizes the process of utilizing a sequence of writing cycles, which provides opportunity for students to negotiate meanings in writing during the writing process (Badger and White 2000; Campbell 1998). Campbell (1998) classified a course of writing activities as planning, gathering information, drafting, revising, and editing, while Badger and White (2000) identified the four stages of a writing cycle (i.e., pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing). These studies illustrate the importance of 'considerable freedom' for writers offered by the process-based approach during the composing process. More specifically, under this approach, students are able to learn how to develop their own writings through each stage connected to each other.

Nevertheless, in the EFL context, the process-based approach has limitations in applying it to writing classrooms. Since this approach puts emphasis on the process of developing ideas in writing over a course of writing practices, it tends to ignore formal aspects of writing such as grammar or content organization. Kim and Kim (2005) illustrated this point, noting that mechanical linguistic features were often ignored under the process-based approach to writing even though they are considered essential in L2 classrooms. Another challenge to the process-based approach in the EFL context is the writing proficiency that often serves as a variable to discourage instructional practices. Typical EFL learners who do not possess a sufficient level of proficiency have difficulties developing

their own ideas in the absence of appropriate writing instructions.

Finally, the '*genre approach*,' recently gaining popularity in L2 writing classes, pays attention to contextual knowledge, writing purposes or situations, and textual features (Badger and White 2000; Dirgeyasa 2016; Hyland 2007; Kay and Dudley-Evans 1998; Kim and Kim 2005; Lu 2011; Rappen 2002). The concept of good writing can widely vary according to the context of writing, requiring different types of writing structures, styles, and a consideration of the audience (i.e., model, field, or tenor). Under the genre approach, students are exposed to a range of knowledge required by a specific genre, thus acquiring familiarity with the distinctive features of a given genre. Through this process, students can understand writing as a tool for communication and why the same content can be differently expressed and organized in writing. Lu (2011) and Rappen (2002) pointed out the importance of the genre approach in L2 classrooms. Specifically, these studies showed that the genre approach is supportive for the L2 writers with less exposure to the target language, suggesting the potential importance of the genre approach model in EFL classrooms.

However, the genre approach shares similar problems discussed in the product-based approach. More specifically, under this approach, students' ways of engaging in writing practices are likely to be constrained mainly due to writing conventions bounded by a given genre. According to Kim (2016), "the genre approach tends to underestimate learners' creative thoughts about contents, since the genre approach pays more attention to writing conventions and genre features"(p. 3). For this reason, instructional practices play a critical role in genre-based writing classes in terms of choosing genres with real world applications, selecting proper sample materials, and organizing writing activities appropriate to L2 students.

2.2 Process-genre approach to writing

In the context of L2 writing classes, a newly emerging approach to writing is the '*process-genre approach*', which hybridizes the process writing into the theory of genre (Badger and White 2000; Gao 2007; Kaur and Chun 2005; Kim and Kim 2005; Xu and Li 2018). The process-genre approach is considered to be a genre

writing connected to a process writing approach, which incorporates a course of writing cycles into the writing process. Thus, the process-genre approach to writing emphasizes writing practices done both at the individual dimension and the social dimension. Under this approach, the limitation of each approach reinforces each other in a synergic way. First, this approach utilizes the genre approach by viewing writing as a communicative tool to convey knowledge of language and context with a specific purpose. By the same token, the process-genre approach also views the writing process as an ability to engage in meaning negotiation acquired by familiarization with various writing cycles.

Situation

Purpose

Consideration (Mode/Field/Tenor)
  □ Planning
  □ Drafting
  □ Publishing
  □ Report

Writing Inputs

□ Teacher
  - Instruction
  - Conferrencing
  - Written feedback

□ Learner
  - Peer feedbacks

□ Texts
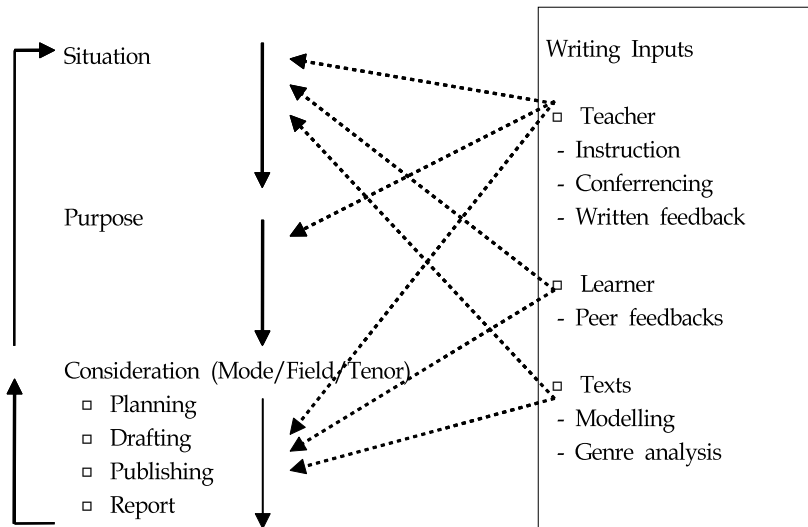 - Modelling
  - Genre analysis

Figure 1. A process genre model of teaching writing (Badger and White 2000)

In the theoretical model suggested by Badger and White (2000), key elements of both the process and genre approaches are unified to produce a complicated and comprehensive writing model. The Badger and White model (2000) consists of features: *situation, purpose, consideration of mode/field/tenor, planning/drafting/ publishing, and the text.* In other words, as students work through the writing process (planning/drafting/redrafting/proofreading/publishing), students need to know what information to use (field), to whom to write (tenor), and how to present description (mode). As shown in Figure 1, the dynamics among the

teacher, learner, and text play a crucial role in the process-genre approach.

When it comes to teaching practices, the process-genre theory clearly illustrates why explicit instruction should be an essential part of EFL classes. Since Korean college students have been exposed to English education that emphasizes formal aspects of languages such as forms and structures combining explicit instruction with the process-genre approach guides students who are familiar with traditional grammar instruction styles to the recognition of writing as a communicative tool. Similarly, Kim (2016) argues that explicit instruction could be effective teaching method applicable to L2 writing classes since most Korean learners do not possess genre-specific knowledge and lack the prerequisite writing skills required for learning under the process-based writing cycle.

Some studies have explored the possible impacts the process-genre approach to writing may have on students' writing development in the context of EFL classes (Lee 2006; Lee 2013; Lee 2001; Kim 2016). However, in prior research, little attention has been paid to the role of writing proficiency in an EFL writing class utilizing the process-genre approach. As an attempt to examine the role of proficiency in writing development, this study explores whether explicit instruction can be an effective teaching technique applicable L2 writing classes, using writing proficiency as a unit of analysis.

Regarding the instructional approach, the researcher employs the teaching and learning cycle proposed by Hyland (2003, 2007). Specifically, in the modeling stage, a teacher provides direct instruction on the form and function of the text to help students learn typical rhetorical patterns of a given genre. In the next stage, students are required to jointly construct a text according to the model suggested by the teacher. At the later stage, students complete their own texts through a sequence of writing cycles followed by drafting, getting feedback from peers and the teacher, and redrafting and editing. The present study selects the two writing genres, narratives and arguments, to examine the role of proficiency in an EFL writing class adopting the process-genre approach to teaching.

a. Narrative writing: to tell stories to engage in an interaction with readers.
b. Argumentive writing: to provide reasons/judgment for a given state of affairs.

3. Method

3.1 Participants and settings

A total of 15 students majoring English Education in a local university were participated in this study, and they shared similar traits in terms of age, educational backgrounds, and literacy. All 15 were freshmen from the Department of English Education, aged 20 to 23, consisting of 8 female and 7 male students. The freshmen are considered to share similar literacy experiences in that they were exposed to a homogeneous secondary education emphasizing test-taking skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, and reading. Under such a product-based approach, they have less opportunities to practice a range of writing and to understand writing as a tool for communication.

The main context of this study was English writing class, a required course for first-year students majoring in English Education. This writing course, open in the second semester to freshmen, is designed to develop students' writing skills by emphasizing the interaction among a teacher, students, and texts over a course of writing cycles. The teaching practices adopt the process-genre approach in that, under process-writing, students would learn how texts are written differently according to social context, purpose, or audience (Macken-Horarik 2002).

Regarding the logistics of the course, the students took the three-hour class every week during the second semester of the year 2019. To measure the extent to which explicit instruction helped to improve students' writing, two types of tests were given to students. More specifically, for each genre of writing task, the pre-test and post-tests were taken before and after explicit writing instruction was provided. In classifying the students into a more proficient group and a less proficient group, the first pre-test score was used as a criterion. The criterion value used as a cut-off point was the mean score obtained from the first pre-test scores of the students. In this study, L2 proficiency was narrowly defined as a writing competence, and writing products obtained from the students were used to measure their writing proficiency.

3.2 Writing tasks

The researcher chose the two writing tasks, given to the students using familiarity and popularity of topics as a criterion to be selected. As shown in Table 1, the writing tasks of *'Narratives'* and *'Argumentatives'* were typical genres often discussed in EFL writing classes.

Table 1. Writing tasks of genres

Genres	Writing Tasks
Task 1 (*Narrative*)	Write about a special event you experienced during summer vacation. (Direction) Think about how to get readers' attention or entertain them.
Task 2 (*Argumentative*)	Should capital punishment be stopped? (Direction) Take your position on the issue and support your position to share your point of view with readers.

In performing writing tasks during the semester, students were required to write the two sets of essays (i.e., pre-test and post-test), using the text structure specific to each genre. In particular, students' performance of pre-tests provided a teacher with valuable information on how they developed their ideas and how they utilized and improved their writing skills appropriate to each genre. The first task was to write a narrative essay in which a student was asked to explain why a certain even was considered to be significant to their academic life. Before conducting the first task, the teacher explained some aspects of a narrative essay using a sample. Through this practice, students were exposed to background knowledge, which helped them perform the narrative essay. Specifically, referring to sample, students could analyze what happened to the author, why a certain event was important, and how it could be significant to readers.

The second task was to compose an argumentative essay in which students were required to persuade audiences of a certain point of view. The topic for the second essay was related to the issue of 'capital punishment', and students needed to explain why they supported or rejected the issue, using facts and details in chronological order. Before engaging in the writing task, students received genre instruction in argumentative writing. Through this practice, the students gained familiarity with typical argumentative essays that take a position using valid reasoning in order to support claims with relevant evidences and to

produce a coherent text appropriate to the given genre.

A writing rubric was used to assess students' progress in writing, and 'The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)' was adopted as the reference in this study. The writing rubric guided by NECAP provides a wide range of measurements in the five performance areas of *Purpose, Organization, Elaboration, Voices, and Grammar/Usage.* The present study used two types of writing rubric applicable to each genre, since a respective genre has different traits in terms of the form and function and text structure. The researcher analyzed students' writing tasks using NECAP instrument, which reflects a holistic scoring system ranging from 1 to 6 (See Appendix). The five areas measured by the NECAP instrument are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The five areas of the writing rubric (NECAP)

NECAP Category	Operational Definition
Purpose	Measure the extent to which the purpose and context of writing are clearly articulated in students' writing.
Organization	Measure whether writing is well organized in terms of coherence and progression of ideas.
Elaboration	Measure to extent to which a certain condition/situation is explained with rich details and insightful elaboration.
Voice	Measure the ability to use language in a way where its tone/voice/styles enhances the meaning.
Grammar/Usage	Measure the extent to which the rules of grade-level grammar, common word usages, and mechanics are consistently applied.

3.3 Data analysis

Classroom procedure. 15 students in an English composition class participated in this study, and the researcher adopted the role of teacher for the semester. The three hours of class were held on a weekly basis during the semester, and the students were required to complete the two types of writing tasks every month.

Students were asked to complete their writing tasks according to the writing cycle. First, in the modelling stage, the teacher provides explicit and direct instruction to help students' genre knowledge, which is comprised of the social

context, text structure, language features, and formal aspects of the target genre. Second, in the scaffolding stage, students engaged in types of group activities to share information on genre knowledge with peer students, and the teacher activated interactional opportunities to help them jointly construct a similar text. Third, in the process writing stage, once a student wrote a draft, s/he received two types of support activities from a teacher and peers. Then, using these feedbacks, students could engage in revising her/his own draft.

Analytic procedures. To examine the effect of the process-genre approach on writing progress, the researcher analyzed writing products according to the scheme guided by the writing rubric. The data analysis employed a constant comparison method (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg and Coleman 2000; Patton 1990), which allows data collection and analysis to proceed simultaneously. This method is considered to be effective in examining the dynamics in writing progress since the researcher can initiate analytic procedures right after the data for the first essay was collected. During the first two months of the semester, the students produced a total of 60 essays, where each student was required to complete 4 essays, or 2 pre-tests and 2 post-tests. The data collected from the 15 students were analyzed according to the following procedures.

First, the one sample t-test measured at 95% confidence was used to examine the differences in writing progress between the two proficiency groups, or the more proficient group and the less proficient group. More specifically, for each genre of writing tasks, the group differences in writing improvement across the five categories of the writing rubric were analyzed to examine the role of the proficiency in the process-genre approach to teaching.

Second, in classifying the students into the two proficient groups, the researcher used L2 writing proficiency measured by the first writing task. Specifically, the mean score for the first essay was used as a cut-off value for grouping the students. In the context of this research, the proficiency was narrowly conceptualized as a competency in L2 writing. For this reason, the researcher assessed students' writing ability using their essay scores from the first essay, rather than using other achievement tests measuring the students' overall English proficiency.

Table 3. The mean writing scores for the two proficient groups

Proficiency Group	Score Range	Median	Mean
Total (N=15)	1.0 ~ 4.0	2.6	2.5(SD = 0.50)
Less G (n=8)	1.0 ~ 2.7	1.9	2.0(SD = 0.32)
More G (n=7)	2.8 ~ 4.0	3.2	3.0(SD = 0.24)

Note: The score range of the writing rubric is 1 to 6, measuring the writing proficiency on a continuum of a 6-point scale.

As shown in Table 3, the mean score of the first essay was 2.5 out of 6 points, which was used as the dividing line between the two proficiency groups. The eight students scoring less than 2.5 were classed in the less proficient group, while the other seven students with scores over 2.6 were assigned to the more proficiency group.

Third, the researcher used a descriptive statistic to analyze the differences in writing progress between the two proficiency groups over the two genre tasks and across five aspects of the writing rubric. From a perspective of the process-genre approach, this study examined the impact that explicit instructions had on writing progress in the five linguistic areas.

Fourth, using individual conferences, the researcher assessed the students' behaviors of engaging in writing practices during the composing process. Individual conferences held at the end of the semester were used to a method to assess the students' behaviors of practicing writing from their perspectives. More specifically, during the conferences, they had the opportunity to share their self-reflections during each stage of the writing cycle. In individual conferences, the instructor and a student would discuss learner-specific challenges and opportunities they experienced in class over the course of writing practices. In this respect, it provides valuable information on how the students in the two different proficiency groups practiced writing under the process-genre approach. Thus, this assessment provides ways to understand how the students in each proficiency group practiced writing in relation to the interaction with peers and the instructor.

4. Results

4.1 Role of proficiency in writing progress

The results from the writing tasks showed that the students in the two proficiency groups experienced gradual progress in writing over a course of writing practices. However, under the process-genre approach to teaching, the effects of the explicit instruction on writing improvement differed widely across the two proficiency groups. For the more proficient group, the instructional impact, measured by the difference in pre- and post-test scores, was found to be significant in the two writing tasks, while those for the less proficient group were not immediate. Table 4 summarizes the test results, including the mean values for the pre-test and post-tests, with a standard deviation and a t-test for the mean differences.

Table 4. Pre-test and Post-test scores for the writing tasks

	Narrative Essay			Argumentive Essay		
	Pre-test Mean(SD)	Post-test Mean(SD)	Diff.	Pre-test Mean(SD)	Post-test Mean(SD)	Diff.
Less G. (n=8)	2.0(0.3)	2.4(0.2)	+0.4	2.1(0.3)	2.5(0.2)	+0.4
More G. (n=7)	3.0(0.2)	3.7(0.3)	+0.7*	2.9(0.3)	3.7(0.4)	+0.8*
Total (N=15)	2.5(0.5)	3.1(0.4)	+0.6*	2.5(0.5)	3.2(0.5)	+0.7*

Note: '*' denotes the significant difference in mean scores between the less- and the more proficiency groups at the 95% confidence level.

When it comes to the narrative essay, L2 writing proficiency played an important role in writing progress in that the instructional impact tended to be skewed to the more proficient group. For the more proficient group, there was significant mean difference between the two tests, with 0.7 (*t(6)=3.56, p<.05*), indicating the level of effectiveness of the process-genre approach to teaching. However, the result for the less proficient group was not supportive of process-genre teaching even though the students in this group showed a gradual improvement, with a mean difference of 0.4 (*t(7)=0.54, p>.05*). It indicates that, from a statistical sense, the progress in writing for the students in the less

proficient group was not significant.

In regards to the writing task associated with the argumentative essay, the t-test scores showed the results similar to the narrative task in that the more proficient group dominated the other group in terms of the improvement in writing skills. For the more proficient group, the mean difference between the two tests was significant with a corresponding number of 0.9 (*t(6)=3.95, p<.05*), which suggests the importance of instructional practices done under the process-genre approach. On the other hand, for the less proficient group, the mean difference between the two tests was not significant, as indicated by a mean difference of 0.4 (*t(7)=0.59, p>.05*).

4.2 Writing progress in NECAP categories

The present study used the writing rubric as an instrument to measure students' writing skills and developed the genre-specific rubric guided by NECAP. This instrument measures the progress in writing in the five areas of linguistic competence including *Purpose, Organization, Elaboration, Voices, and Grammar/Usage*. The results showed that, in the EFL writing class underlying the process-genre approach, the explicit instruction had unequal impact on students' writing improvement across the proficiency groups. Although all of the students gradually improved in writing, the instructional benefits tended to be skewed toward the more proficient group. The test results for the five categories of NECAP are reported in Table 5.

For the students in the less proficient group, the instructional effects were significant only in two areas of the NECAP measures, *Purpose* and *Organization*. The mean differences for the *Purpose* scores between the two tests were 0.7 (*t(7)=3.49, p<.05*) in the narrative writing task and 0.8 in the argumentative writing task, respectively. Students in the less proficient group also showed significant improvement in the *Organization* measure with 0.6 (*t(7)=2.45, p<.05*) in the narrative writing. But, the other three measures of NECAP, *Elaboration, Voices, and Grammar/Usage* were found not to be significant, indicating that the improvement in writing differed across the proficiency groups.

Table 5. The NECAP results for the less proficient group

	Narrative Essay			Argumentive Essay		
	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean (SD)	Diff.	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean (SD)	Diff.
Purpose	1.9	2.6(0.3)	+0.7*	1.9	2.7(0.3)	+0.8*
Organization	1.9	2.5(0.2)	+0.6*	2.0	2.5(0.3)	+0.5
Elaboration	1.9	2.2(0.3)	+0.3	2.0	2.4(0.2)	+0.4
Voice	2.2	2.3(0.2)	+0.1	2.2	2.4(0.3)	+0.2
Grammar	2.3	2.5(0.3)	+0.2	2.3	2.5(0.2)	+02

Note: '*' denotes the significant difference in mean scores between the less- and more proficiency groups at the 95% confidence level.

1. Purpose: evaluates writing with a specific purpose or social context of writing.
2. Organization: evaluates the coherence of organizing and synthesizing.
3. Elaboration: evaluates the development of the thesis with appropriate supporting evidence.
4. Voice: evaluates an author's view, tone, and style incorporated into a text.
5. Grammar: evaluates the formal aspects of writing and usages.

For the students in the more proficient group, the progress in writing was immediate across all NECAP measures except for the *Grammar/Usage* category. This result indicates that, in the process-genre approach to teaching, writing proficiency could simultaneously be both a variable in promoting learning potential and constraining learning potential. The NECAP results for the more proficient group are summarized in Table 6. In particular, the instructional practices done under the process genre-based approach played an important role in the four areas of *Purpose, Organization, Elaboration,* and *Voice.* The *t*-test results showed that the progress in writing in all four categories was considered to be significant at the 95% confidence level.

But, the students in the more proficient group did not show significant progress in the *Grammar* category, which measured formal aspects of writing. For the *Grammar* category, the mean difference between the two tests was 0.2 (*t(6)=0.41, p>.05*) in the narrative writing task and 0.3 (*t(6)=0.57, p>.05*) in the argumentative task, respectively. This result indicates that writing practices done under the process-genre approach may have a limited effect on improving grammar including the application of rules or usages even for the high proficient learners.

Table 6. The NECAP results for the more proficient group

	Narrative Essay			Argumentive Essay		
	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean (SD)	Diff.	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean (SD)	Diff.
Purpose	3.0	4.0(0.3)	+1.0*	2.9	4.1(0.3)	+1.2*
Organization	2.8	3.8(0.2)	+1.0*	2.7	3.8(0.3)	+1.1*
Elaboration	3.1	3.8(0.3)	+0.7*	2.9	3.5(0.2)	+0.6*
Voice	2.9	3.5(0.4)	+0.6*	3.0	3.5(0.3)	+0.5
Grammar	3.2	3.4(0.1)	+0.2	3.3	3.6(0.2)	+0.3

Note: '*' denotes the significant difference in mean scores between the less- and more proficiency groups at the 95% confidence level.

1. Purpose: evaluates writing with a specific purpose or social context of writing.
2. Organization: evaluates the coherence of organizing and synthesizing.
3. Elaboration: evaluates the development of the thesis with appropriate supporting evidence.
4. Voice: evaluates an author's view, tone, and style incorporated into a text.
5. Grammar: evaluates the formal aspects of writing and usages.

The results support instructional practices under the process-genre approach since all of the students experienced gradual or incremental progress in writing across both proficiency groups and different writing practices. Two qualifications exist. First, in the context of an EFL writing class, L2 writing proficiency served as a variable that determines the extent to which students developed writing skills. Second, the instructional effect on the grammatical aspect of writing was not immediate, suggesting that a teacher should find a way to incorporate a formal aspect of writing into the teaching practices under the process-genre approach.

An analysis of individual conferences clearly showed that L2 proficiency matter in writing class underlying the process-genre approach. In individual conferences held at the end of the semester, most of the students in the less proficient group illustrated how lack of linguistic knowledge constrained their interactional opportunities while engaging in writing practices. The excerpts from students A and C in the less proficiency group pointed out this deficiency.

In classroom discussions, students in peer groups often said to me, "you need to organize your writing 'coherently' to convince your audience," but, I still didn't understand what they were talking about. In many other times, I was not able to

participate in class discussions for this reason. (individual conference, student A, November 7, 2019)

I did not understand the meaning of the 'thesis development' in writing. In class discussions, everybody discussed how to develop the thesis in an argumentative essay, but in my eyes, everyone seemed to have the same thesis in their writing. (individual conference, Student C, November 6, 2019)

The same point was also mentioned by a student in the more proficient group during an individual conference. The excerpts from student J in the more proficiency group pointed out how an engagement in discussion with a low proficient student was often constrained.

In classroom discussions, I had difficulty in communicating with some students because they didn't seem to understand some basic concepts, such as "developing your own ideas, organizing writing coherently." For this reason, my classroom discussions in may times were ended up with superficial communication. (individual conference, student J, November 7, 2019)

Similarly, students D and E in the less proficiency group illustrated why group discussions about 'elaboration' and 'social context' were likely to be superficial during the interaction with peers.

We repeatedly discussed the importance of the 'mode, field, tenor' in writing several times during the semester. And I did my best to understand what these meant. But, I did't say anything about them in class discussion because I had no ideas. (individual conference, Student D, November 7, 2019)

The teacher often said, "'elaborate' your point to persuade your audience." But, I really didn't understand how to elaborate. In class discussion, peer students explained it many times, but I still did not understand what they were talking about. (individual conference, Student E, November 6, 2019)

Student K in the more proficiency group, in an individual conference, helped

to understand why students with low proficiency engaged in superficial interaction during the classroom interaction.

> *During the discussion, I realized that some students [in the low proficient group] did not fully understand reading materials. Since they didn't clearly comprehend reading sources, it was very difficult for me to talk about writing tasks with them intensively. (individual conference, Student K, November 6, 2019)*

The students in the less proficient groups showed less progress in writing skills in the three areas of the writing rubric, indicating that writing proficiency mattered in process genre-based instruction. And, the private interviews with students explained why students with limited proficiency were less benefitted in a writing class. More importantly, low-level English proficiency could slow down the potential for learning by seriously constraining interactional opportunities during writing practices. In this respect, a teacher needs to consider writing proficiency as an essential part of teaching in the process-genre approach.

5. Discussions

This study showed that the process-genre approach to teaching could have different effects on the progress in writing according to the proficiency levels. In the EFL writing class utilizing the process-genre approach to teaching, more proficient students showed a greater progress in writing than did less proficient students. More specifically, the more proficient group dominated the less proficient group in term of incremental progress and the range of improvement across linguistic competencies. This implies that L2 writing proficiency can be a key variable to explain learner differences in writing development, emphasizing the role of L2 writing proficiency in teaching practices by focusing on the behavior of engaging in classroom interactions during the writing process.

Such a point is evidenced by the result reported in the previous section in that the students in the less proficient group experienced little progress in all of NECAP measures, as compared to the students in the more proficient group. However, this result was not consistent with a strand of studies providing

supporting evidence for the genre-based writing instruction (Babalola 2012; Badger and White 2000; Gao 2007; Kaur and Chun 2005; Kim and Kim 2005). However, in previous studies, writing proficiency was not carefully treated, so the concept of a gradual progress in writing is likely to be misleading.

A writing cycle of 'modeling-scaffolding-composing' proposed by Badger and White (2000) illustrates the importance of the scaffolding stage in writing practices. To understand the role of proficiency in writing classes, we as researchers need to know how students with a limited proficiency engage in classroom interactions. In the literature, Kim (2016) supported this point by showing that low proficiency tended to constrain interactional opportunities available to students. Using empirical studies, she revealed that writing proficiency is closely related to the quality of interaction, leading to the scaffolding. From the process writing perspective (Gibbons 2002; Graham 2018; Graham and Sandmel 2011; Hough, Hixon, Decker, and Bradley-Johnson 2012), the scaffolding also plays an important role since classroom practices serve as a social place to develop writing skills through negotiating expertise and difficulties with peers and the teacher.

However, interactional opportunities available to students are often seriously constrained in the scaffolding stage especially for the students with limited proficiency. In this study, the students in the less proficient group had difficulties in understanding some elements delivered to them in the modelling stage. For instance, they were unable to conceptualize some instructional practices such as social contexts, text structure, and typical rhetoric patterns of a genre during the writing process. For the students with low proficiency, the lack of linguistic knowledge required in the modelling stage tended to become an obstacle to productive interactions with peers and an instructor.

Another point to discuss is why L2 proficiency is more closely related to the 'Voice' and 'Elaboration' areas of the writing rubric. Kim (2016), in her empirical study, clearly showed that 'Voice' was considered as a writing skill acquired through the process of social interactions over time, requiring longer horizon of learning practices done under the social domain. It explained why learning outcome may not be immediate for the studies that examined the treatment effects or that conducted longitudinal effects bound by one or two semesters.

When it comes to the 'Elaboration' category, the less proficient group is likely

to encounter the similar problem. An elaboration of writing requires the range of linguistic resources available to them, which could be acquired through the writing and teaching practices in the form of instructional interventions. As Kim (2016) argues, some aspects of writing, such as '*Voices*' and '*Elaboration*' should be measured on a continuum of social practices (a novice-expert interaction) and on a continuum of individual practices (a learner-text interaction).

6. Conclusion

This study provides some implications applicable to L2 writing classes adopting the process-genre approach to teaching. First, the consideration of writing proficiency should be incorporated into writing practices since instructional effects varied widely according to the proficiency level of the student. During the modelling stage, in particular, a process genre-based instruction should be designed to promote written or oral communication among students with different levels of writing proficiency. To achieve this goal, we as teachers should articulate the role of proficiency in planning instructional practices, classroom activities, and the teaching-learning cycle.

Second, in the scaffolding stage, classroom practices such as group activities should serve as a means to negotiate expertise and difficulties by interacting with peers and a teacher. It is essential that, to promote interactional opportunities available to students with limited proficiency, a teacher finds a way to maintain the quality of interaction during the writing process. Third, under the process-genre approach, explicit instruction helps little to improve the grammatical aspect of writing. It suggests that a formal aspect of writing should be considered as a linguistic area that should be taught separately. In this respect, a teacher would find a specific way to incorporate a grammar instruction into the process-genre approach to writing.

The purpose of this research is to provide pedagogical implications applicable to EFL writing classes, not to generalize the results across different learning contexts. More importantly, since the teaching and learning in L2 is context-specific, the findings should not be used as an evidence to support the widespread application of process genre-based instruction. In addition, the role

of proficiency in the process genre-based writing indicates that ways of engaging in writing practices are learner-specific. In this respect, the role of writing proficiency should be examined under various learning contexts to understand learner differences in writing practices.

The results of this study call for future research. First, research in this field should pay attention to instructional models that are attentive to differences in writing proficiency. From a qualitative perspective, researchers are encouraged to examine individual differences in writing practices done under the process-genre approach rather than to generalize instructional effects across contexts. Second, empirical studies using a large sample can help to examine whether the findings of this study can be generalized across various proficiency levels. For example, the result of this study might provide different implications if the students are grouped in several proficiency groups.

This study provides pedagogical implications for developing instructional models appropriate to L2 writing classes that should be discussed in future research. To achieve this goal, classroom teachers are encouraged to conduct teacher research incorporating the process genre-based instruction into traditional writing classes. More specifically, researchers need to pay attention to how to deal with L2 writing proficiency in traditional English writing classes underlying an encapsulated instruction. In this respect, future research should provide the way in which classroom teachers develop teaching models deferentially appropriate across the different proficiency groups.

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Appendix A

Writing rubric for a narrative essay

6	5	4	3	2	1
purpose and context are engaging	purpose and context are clear	purpose and context are evident	writing has a general purpose	attempted or vague purpose	minimal evidence of purpose
intentionally organized, with a progression of ideas	well-organized and coherent throughout, with a progression of ideas	generally organized and coherent	some sense of organizati-on; may have lapses in coherence	attempted organiza-tion; lapses in coherence	little or no organization few or random details
analyzes a condition or situation using rich and insightful elaboration	○analyzes a condition or situation using meaningful details/elaboration	explains a condition or situation using relevant details uses language adequately; uses correct sentence structures	addresses a condition or situation; some relevant details support purpose	○may state a condition or situation; generalized listed or undeveloped details	rudimentary or deficient use of language may have errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning
distinctive voice, tone, and style enhance meaning	uses language effectively; uses a variety of sentence structures	may have some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics	uses language adequately; may show little variety of sentence structures	may lack sentence control or may use language poorly	
consistent application of the rules of grade- level grammar, usage and mechanics	consistent application of the rules of grade- level grammar, usage, and mechanics		may have some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics	may have errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning	

Appendix B

Writing rubric for an argumentative essay

6	5	4	3	2	1
purpose/ position is clear throughout; strong focus/position; OR strongly stated purpose/opinion focuses the writing intentionally organized for effect	purpose/ position is clear; stated focus/opinion main-tained consistently throughout well-organ nized and coherent throughout	purpose/ position and focus are evident, but may not be maintained generally well-organi-zed and coherent	purpose/ position may be general some sense of organization; may have lapses in coherence	attempted or vague purpose/ position attempted organization; lapses in coherence	minimal evidence of purpose/positio n little or no organiza-tion random or minimal details
fully developed arguments and reasons; rich, insightful elaboration supports purpose/ opinion	argument/reaso ns are relevant & support purpose/ opinion; arguments/reas ons are sufficiently elaborated	arguments are appropriate and mostly support purpose/opinion well-constructed sentences; uses language well may contain some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics	some relevant details support purpose; arguments are thinly developed generally correct sentence structure; uses language adequately may contain some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics	generali-zed, listed, or undeve-loped details/ reasons may lack sentence control or may use language poorly may contain errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning	rudimen-tary or deficient use of language may have errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning
distinctive voice, tone, and style effectively support position consistent application of the rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics	strong command of sentence structure; uses language to support position consistent application of the rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics				

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