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**The Effect of Using the Process Genre Approach on
Developing Reflective Writing Skills and Genre
Awareness of EFL Faculty of Specific Education
Sophomore Students**

BY

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the effect of the process genre approach on EFL sophomore students' reflective writing skills and genre awareness. The participants were 60 EFL sophomores at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University. The study employed a quasi-experimental design in which two groups were assigned, i.e. an experimental group (n=30) and a control one (n=30). Two instruments were designed by the researcher to collect data, i.e. a reflective writing skills test and a genre awareness scale. Results indicated that experimental group students scored significantly higher than those in the control group on the reflective writing skills test and genre awareness scale. Based on these results, EFL instructors need to incorporate the process genre approach into their teaching of EFL writing skills. More emphasis should be given to develop students' reflective practices and enhance their knowledge of text genres.

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أثر مدخل العمليات و نمط النص فى تنمية مهارات لكتابة التأملية و
الوعى بنمط النص لدى طلاب الفرقة الثانية شعبة اللغة الانجليزية بكلية
التربية النوعية

د/عمر و فتحى عبد الوهاب
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المخلص:

هدف البحث الحالى الى تقصّي أثر استخدام مدخل العمليات و نمط النص فى تنمية
مهارات الكتابة التأملية و الوعى بنمط النص لدى طلاب الفرقة الثانية شعبة اللغة الانجليزية
بكلية التربية النوعية، و قد تألفت عينة البحث من 60 طالباً و طالبة موزعين على مجموعتين
(مجموعة تجريبية ن = 30، و مجموعة ضابطة ن = 30)، كما تمثلت أدوات البحث فى
اختبار مهارات الكتابة التأملية و مقياس الوعى بنمط النص، و اسفرت التحليلات الكمية
لنتائج الطلاب عن وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية بين متوسطى درجات طلاب المجموعتين
للتطبيق البعدى لاختبار مهارات الكتابة التأملية و مقياس الوعى بنمط النص لصالح
المجموعة التجريبية، و فى ضوء هذه النتائج تم تقديم مجموعة من التوصيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مدخل العمليات و نمط النص، الكتابة التأملية ، الوعى بنمط النص.

I. Introduction

Within the umbrella of social constructivism, writing is influenced by the social context and enhanced by building on past knowledge. Social constructivism posits that learners build knowledge collaboratively within the group using authentic learning tasks. Through discourse and interaction with other members, learners can actively construct knowledge and reach new understandings. In addition, the social context in which learners create meaning is an essential element that contributes most to the improvement of students' learning (Doubleday et al., 2015). Hence, learners are not seen as passive recipients of knowledge but, rather, active constructors of learning. What is more important is the students' role and how they employ background knowledge and direct their perceptions and interpretations in the learning process.

Hence, writing is viewed as a psychological process in which learners negotiate thoughts to reach consensus. In this respect, teachers can support students to be engaged collaboratively and establish classroom writing communities to discuss their own writings through imaginary dialogues about the writing genres. Teachers can also offer cognitive apprenticeships to help students acquire skills to increase independent performance. Taking the advantage of teacher-student conferencing, the teacher can actively negotiate a topic and invites the students to ask and respond to questions. Students can then be engaged in collaborative tasks to discuss their own writings (McCarthy, 2008). Conferencing can be utilized in different stages of writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, and revising). Thus, students become more connected to their social contexts and are able to deal with different problems that encounter them while writing. Additionally, the social constructivist frame enhances students' perceptions of themselves and their colleagues, helps them become more reflective, and positively influences their attitude towards writing.

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Writing is a complex cognitive process involving various interrelated components that requires systematic instruction. This requires students to determine the writing purposes, analyze the tasks, monitor their progress during writing, and sustain their confidence and motivation (Philippakos & Moore, 2017). Owing to these challenges, students should communicate their thinking effectively during the various writing tasks in order to overcome different obstacles. They need to learn well the steps through which they write a specific genre and to explain how they apply each step, which will help them produce coherent and clear paragraphs. Additionally, getting involved in writing different text genres, students can present their ideas clearly and thoroughly.

Despite various approaches to teach writing, numerous challenges face EFL college students in producing written materials. Kim and Kim (2005, p. 68) affirmed that it is challenging to instruct and monitor the various components of writing. Teaching writing also poses certain difficulties to teachers; it can be time consuming as the process of grading students' writings can take much time. In addition, other challenges can stem from students' confidence to write their own pieces independently. Graham, Herbert, and Harris (2015) added that writing is considered a complex cognitive task that requires development in language use , textual abilities , background knowledge sources, coordination of processes and skills, and genre awareness. Due to the multifaceted nature of writing development, EFL students need to be strategic as well as knowledgeable.

Context of the problem

To shed light on the study problem, a pilot study was conducted on a random sample of 87 EFL sophomores at the Faculty of Specific Education during the first semester of the academic year 2018/2019. A reflective writing test and a genre awareness scale were administered to the students. Results revealed that 83% of the students obtained very low scores on the reflective writing test, whereas 92% were not aware of text genres.

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Investigating EFL students' level in reflective writing, El-Hadidy (2007) found that EFL college students lacked the ability to reflect and think deeply when producing written texts. They were not able to elaborate on their feelings and experiences, and analyze the events in terms of particular evidence. Hence, students are in mere need to explore new ideas and draw on different sources in order to gain more understandings and form different perspectives. In Hume's (2009) observation of her students, it was reported that (a) most of the students' reflective writings were shallow and indicated a low level of thinking; (b) they lacked the pedagogical insights necessary for successful writing; and (c) they were not able to think about their own experiences and improve their writing practices. In his attempt to classify the nature of reflective writing, Roberts (2012) affirmed that most students struggle to engage with high levels of reflection. Consequently, this might hinder them to link theory and practice and prevent them from linking experience to learning.

In her investigation of students' genre awareness, Hüttner (2015) administered genre awareness questionnaires and interviews among EFL second year college students. It was noted that most students lacked necessary knowledge of genre in terms of communicative purposes and move realisations. Only 24% of the students listed the communicative purposes of the text genre. Finally, Hüttner stressed the need for developing students' writing by analysing their productions in terms of communicative purposes and genre structure.

Statement of the problem

The problem of the study could thus be formulated that EFL sophomore college students exhibited low reflective writing levels, and they lacked awareness of text genres. To overcome these problems, the current study attempted to answer the following main question: "What is the effect of using the process genre approach on developing reflective writing skills and genre awareness of EFL faculty of specific education sophomore students?"

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This main question was sub-divided into the following:

1. What is the effect of using the process genre approach on developing reflective writing skills of EFL faculty of specific education sophomore students?
2. What is the effect of using the process genre approach on developing genre awareness of EFL faculty of specific education sophomore students?

Hypotheses of the study

The following hypotheses were formulated, comparing the mean scores of the control group and those of the experimental one as well as the pre-and post- results of the experimental group.

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of their control peers in the post administration of the reflective writing test favoring the experimental group students.
2. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre-post administration of the reflective writing test favoring post administration results.
3. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of their control peers in the post administration of the genre awareness scale favoring the experimental group students.
4. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre-post administration of the genre awareness scale favoring post administration results.

Significance of the study

This study provides a genre awareness scale for EFL learners. This helps EFL instructors evaluate their students' writings in terms of the generic structures. Stressing the importance of genre knowledge, EFL instructors can thus help students produce well-structured texts that meet their needs in terms of construction, organization, coherence and style, as well as transfer genre knowledge to other written texts. As this study investigates the process-genre approach, it is expected to provide insights into how to utilize the steps of the process genre approach in order to assist students to present their ideas clearly and thoroughly, evaluate and synthesize them, and then communicate them effectively.

Definition of terms

The following definitions are adopted in the present study:

The Process genre approach

According to Badger and White (2000), the PGA involves providing knowledge about language (as in the product and genre approaches), knowledge about the context in which writing occurs and the purpose of writing (as in the genre approach), and knowledge about language skills (as in the process approach).

Reflective Writing

Reflective writing is defined as the type of writing which involves "... consideration of the larger context, the meaning, and the implications of an experience or action" (Branch & Paranjape, 2002, p. 1185).

Reflective writing is defined as "an active process paying attention to process as much as product, grounded in the conviction that language is not just a means of encouraging literacy but the foundation of all learning" (National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, 2003, p. 12).

Genre awareness

To Devitt (2004) genre awareness can be defined as "a critical consciousness and ideological effects of genre forms" (p.192). According to Johns (2008), the concept of genre awareness requires developing students' rhetorical flexibility in order to be adapted for the socio-cognitive knowledge and be able to expand their information to other contexts.

II. Review of Literature

Recently, the development of reflective practices has become an integral part of contemporary education for different purposes. In EFL contexts, a student's reflective ability is a key factor in enhancing exploration of experiences and promoting different perspectives and understandings (Roberts, 2012). In order to achieve a deeper level of understanding and reframe thoughts and experiences, EFL learners need to integrate practice-based experiences into learning. Hence, students can interpret their reflections by giving them the opportunity to write in a reflective mode.

One of the major aims of reflective writing is to achieve higher levels of reflective thinking. The ability to explore new ideas, reflect on personal experiences and knowledge is a key to clarify the utility of thinking. In addition, the acceptance and exploration of new ideas offer the opportunity to shape thinking based on preconceived ideas and assumptions (Brockbank & McGill, 2007).). In order to write reflectively, students need to develop their thinking skills, e.g. thinking about themselves, their experiences, and their view of the world. This requires students to make connections, organize thoughts and structures, determine whether notions and assumptions have shaped their thoughts, and decide in what way their assumptions can support what they have read.

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Moreover, reflection emphasizes analytic skills which encourage students to express a wide variety of thoughts, and more significantly, how these thoughts are shaped. In order to improve students' ability to go beyond describing processes or phenomena, teachers should guide the students to actively derive new meanings using existing ideas (Winner, 2013). This involves students to analyze events, explore different ideas and connect them logically, identify relevant information, and forming new ideas. Such analysis requires careful thinking about available information and assumptions, actively reflecting on the different aspects of an argument, testing the evidence used to support claims. Reflective writing can therefore provide the foundation to develop intellectual skills.

Research studies asserted the need to strengthen the quality of students' reflection, especially in terms of their reflective writing skills (e.g., Cohen-Sayag, & Fischl, 2012; Hume, 2009; Roberts, 2012). In a longitudinal study, Cohen-Sayag and Fischl (2012) examined the links between pre-service teacher's reflective writing skills and their success in teaching. Findings showed that there was a positive correlation between teachers' descriptive and comparative reflection, and their field experience in the first semester. On the other hand, critical reflection only correlated with field experience in the second semester.

In his study of the nature of reflective writing, Roberts (2012) highlighted the importance of reflection in assisting students to elaborate on and benefit from their prior experiences. A model classifying written texts in terms of the focus and level of reflection was utilized. He concluded that students showed greater degree of self-reflection. They also contextualized their learning according to their prior experiences and knowledge. Based on an action research study, Hume (2009) introduced purposeful coaching of reflective writing skills using a journal writing intervention. Students' reflective skills were investigated using a formal action research cycle. Results indicated that students' reflective skills were improved due to the focused and intense nature of

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the reflective tasks. Deeper and further thinking also helped the students increase their insights into learning.

To ensure a high level of writing practices in EFL contexts, teachers need to elicit approaches which accommodate students' needs, time constraints, and learning preferences of individual students. Therefore, a number of writing approaches with distinct stages were emerged, e.g. product approach, process approach and genre approach. However, arguments revealed that such approaches still face limitations and restrictions.

Exploring the shift from product to process approaches of writing, Hyland (2003) and Jarunthawatchai (2010) viewed writing as a cyclical approach rather than a single-shot product in one session. According to the traditional product approach, students viewed texts as similarly structured entities with certain patterns. Teachers were required to encourage parallel text production with no regard to the text purposes and the writer's personal experience. Conversely, the process approach of writing allows students to refine their writings through a number of guided recursive stages, i.e. pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing. Students are thus motivated and engaged in their writing tasks by choosing the tasks and the steps they should take to reach the ultimate goal. They are expected to develop their writing through drafting and receiving feedback from their peers and/or from the teacher, and finally through revising and editing their texts. Thus, the process approach focuses on the message rather than the grammar of a written piece.

Although the process approach fosters student-centered learning and engages students in developmental processes, it has its own limitations (kim & Kim, 2005). It assumes that all types of writing can be produced by employing the same set of processes. Additionally, students are not given the opportunity to enrich their linguistic input to be able to produce effective written materials. Furthermore, this approach lacks the modeling stage which allows students to analyze the linguistic and

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schematic structures of a given text. Apparently, students would not achieve the social purpose of the written text.

Emphasizing the social context in which writing is produced, a genre-based approach emerged as an alternative to the product approach and the process approach of writing. Hyland (2007) and Nueva (2016) noted that writing, according to this approach, encompasses three main stages: (a) modeling the target genre for the students, (b) joint construction of text by the teacher and the students, (c) independent construction of text by each student. Students can consciously apply the three stages through imitation and analysis.

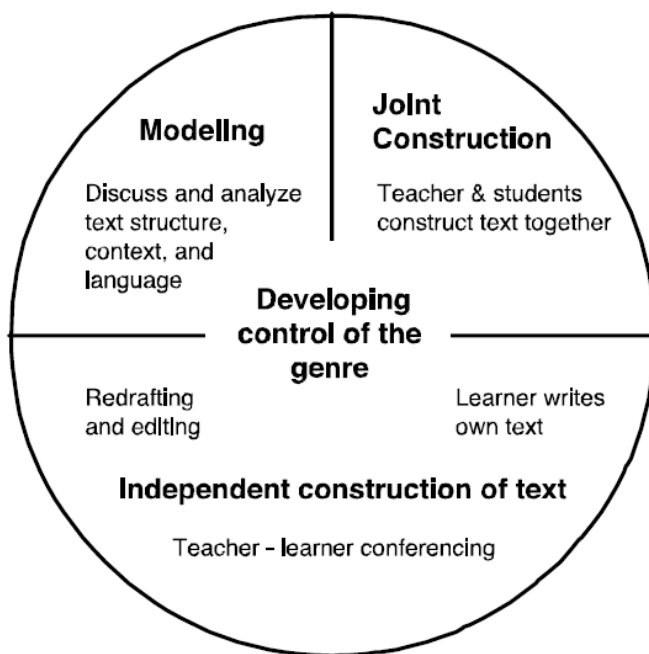


Figure 1. The teaching learning cycle of the genre-based approach (Hyland, 2003, p. 21)

Although the genre-based approach emphasizes the structure and form of written materials, it still lacks the recursive processes of writing. Hyland further stressed that the effective application of writing requires integrating various approaches. As a result the process- genre approach

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was adopted to develop EFL students' reflective writing. When combining the process approach and the genre approach, students can be acquainted with the features of language structures, knowledge of the context in which the text occurs, the purpose of the text, and the skills of language. Consequently, students can grasp the knowledge of different text genres as well as the processes involved, which helps them produce what is expected from them.

Following the process-genre approach (PGA), students are expected to implement six stages: preparation, modeling and reinforcing, planning, joint structuring, independent structuring, and revising. The six guided stages of writing allow students to develop their awareness of text structure through investigating a variety of genres with consideration of the social context and purpose of the text (Yan, 2005). Writing tasks involve creating a situation and scaffolding students to grasp the purpose and the context of the text. Students can then practice language use through various writing processes (Badger & White 2000).

Thus, this approach puts emphasis on both the purpose and form of a particular genre, as well as the recursive processes of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. The focus is on the different processes involved in writing, as well as, on the form and function of text genres. Besides, students can enhance their deeper understanding and engagement by setting goals, organizing ideas, solving problems, and revising.

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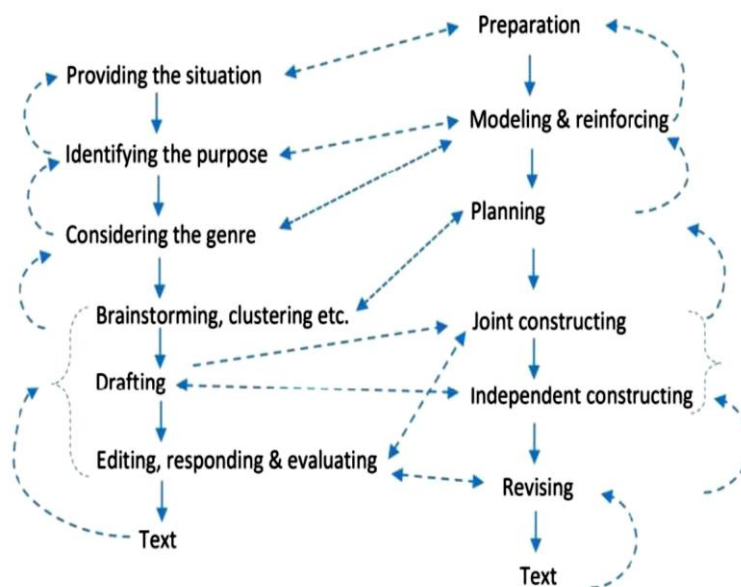


Figure 2: The process-genre approach (Badger & White, 2000)

Integrating both the formal aspects and processes of writing, Kim & Kim (2005) introduced four main principles of the process genre approach to overcome the obstacles precluding writing development. The first principle, which is balancing the linguistic form of the language and function, puts emphasis on both the grammatical rules (as suggested by the product and genre approaches) and skills (as suggested by the process approach). Grammar is considered as a dynamic set of categories and forms which EFL learners exploit while navigating through discourse. Learners can, in turn, integrate both the linguistic aspects and writing processes to achieve clear understanding and fulfil their communicative needs.

The second principle involves scaffolding language and learning which provides active interaction between students and the teacher in the form of instructional and motivational support. The scaffolding stage is temporary, as teachers support learners till they acquire new skills or

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reach new understandings. Teachers can do this by building on students' previous knowledge and experiences in order to enhance the mastery of tasks and promote higher levels of understanding. Thus, learners can achieve various tasks within their zone of proximal development, the distance between learner's actual level and the potential development under the assistance of peers or the teacher. It is, therefore, important for the instructor to ensure that learners are able to use language that is appropriate for the target genre (Gibbons & Cummins, 2002 and Kim & Kim, 2005).

The third principle suggested by Kim & kim (2005) is extending the writing curriculum. In this respect, learners need to practice a wide variety of text types in addition to identifying and analyzing different key genres. Students can then expand relevant genres and apply different writing tasks. To accomplish this goal, students should experience diverse text genres and bring their background knowledge to construct knowledge of the content. Students should also employ additional and diverse reading resources to expand their ideas and knowledge. Moreover, students are allowed to practice a wide range of writing tasks in order for them to become autonomous learners.

The fourth principle includes providing more meaningful responses and productive assessment. This entails applying different types of assessments that promote interaction and enhance active learning. Besides, different types of feedback should be employed such as teacher written feedback, peer feedback and teacher- student conferencing. Teacher's written feedback takes the form of commentary, rubrics, minimal marking, and electronic feedback. Peer feedback can be valuable in improving students' drafts. Teacher-student conferencing, on the other hand, can be a supplement for the one-way written feedback.

Considering research in this area, a wide variety of studies affirmed positive findings of using the process-genre approach in English language teaching (e.g., Agibuay, 2016; Assaggaf, 2016; Babalola, 2012; Gupitasari, 2013; Rahmi and Soraya, 2015; Reonal, 2015). Integrating both the process and genre approaches, Agibuay (2016) investigated the

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use of the process-genre approach in developing EFL students' descriptive writing. The data were collected using percentages, t-values, and mean differences. Considering the pretest and posttest scores, results signified a marked improvement in students' descriptive writing level. It was noted that a rare occurrence of grammatical errors was detected in the students' final products. Implementing the process-genre approach in teaching report writing, Assaggaf (2016) conducted a study on 17 EFL students attending a writing course intended to develop learners' ability to produce reports. Two types of instruments were administered: an observation sheet which was used to describe implementing the PGA and a questionnaire which was designed for eliciting students' views of the approach. Results revealed that students had positive views towards implementing the process-genre approach. Using the PGA helped the students comprehend and produce project reports, as well as be aware of the purpose of writing.

Rahmi and Soraya (2015) examined the effect of the process genre approach on developing academic writing in the IELTS writing section. Adopting a quasi-experimental method, the study employed both a pre-test and a post-test to find out whether the PGA is effective. Findings showed that the experimental group surpassed the control one in all criteria of the IELTS academic writing, particularly in terms of coherence and cohesion. In addition, experimental group students showed positive responses as concerning their perceptions of the PGA. Most students reached consensus that their writing was improved, especially when they modeled the text and when working collaboratively. In an attempt to develop EFL students' level of the expository writing genre, (Reonal, 2015) explored the use of process-genre based expository writing lessons by a group of EFL freshmen university students. A rubric for evaluating the lessons, and pre and post tests for assessing students' writings were used as the study instruments. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the lessons helped the students understand the purpose and structure of the expository genre,

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and improve their performances in terms of sentence fluency, organization, and voice.

Gupitasari (2013) conducted a study to find out the effect of the process-genre approach on EFL students' ability to write business letters. Students' responses to the implementation of the PGA were also investigated. Based on a classroom action research, 28 twelfth grade students participated in the study. The data gathered from an observation sheet, a writing test and a questionnaire were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. After conducting the PGA, results revealed improvements in students' writing scores. Moreover, students had positive responses towards the implementation of the PGA.

Stressing the linguistic knowledge and schematic structure of texts, Pujianto, Emilia, and Ihrom (2014) investigated how the PGA could be utilized to develop report text writing skills of senior students. Based on students' written text analysis and teaching process, findings showed that the process-genre approach helped students develop their writing skills. This improvement was due to genre knowledge, feedback from teacher and from peers, and writing process. However, low-achieving students needed more modeling to develop their skills.

Babalola (2012) examined the effect of the process genre approach on computer science students' performance in English writing. Based on a quasi-experimental design, the study involved 40 students chosen randomly from two classes and divided into two groups (an experimental group and a control one). After analyzing the data using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), findings revealed a significant effect of implementing the process genre approach in developing students' writing performance.

Being originated from discourse analysis, genre analysis puts more emphasis on communicative purposes, rhetorical features of written materials, and description of how language is used. The fundamental aim of studying text genre is to investigate learners' communicative purposes

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and linguistic knowledge (Qin, 2000, p. 42). Thus, genre analysis marks a shift from studying the surface level of a text to a deep understanding of the sociocultural as well as the psycholinguistic aspects of texts.

The potential of genre awareness in transferring knowledge from one context to another has been stressed as a pedagogical tool to examine the generic structures of other written materials. By identifying the generic forms of different texts, students can transfer what they have learnt to other writing tasks. Hence, genre awareness is not only beneficial in writing classes but also useful for students in all disciplines. In her study of a writer's transfer of skills, Beaufort (2007) emphasized that knowledge of genre awareness takes the form of mental schema which learners invoke when they analyze written materials in new contexts.

Genre is viewed as a communicative event or a goal-directed activity, involving certain schematic structures. This type of event or activity usually comprises certain communicative purposes which forms the rationale for the genre. Such rationale influences the content and style of writing and forms the schematic structures of the discourse (Deng, Chen, and Zhang, 2014, p.4). Swales (1990, p.58) and Bhatia (1993, p.13) maintained that knowledge of text genres encompasses identifying a set of communicative purposes which may be different for each learner. A significant contribution of the text genres is extending writing tasks from just producing the final written product to analyzing the text genre. Students can then further their understanding through realizing the social purposes of the text, as well as recognise how schematic structures are employed in a specific genre. This comprises applying different stages of writing and integrating different approaches to help EFL students construct and produce their written work.

As a concept affected by genre studies, genre has been linked to two major approaches, i.e. a text-based approach and a situation-oriented approach. The first emphasizes the different generic features of a specific

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genre, whereas the latter focuses on the rhetorical situations which foster students' contextual awareness (Chen, 2008, p.194). Genre awareness does not merely involve acquiring knowledge on how to use a particular structure; rather it requires gaining insight into how the different components of writing (e.g., the text, the writer, and the reader) fulfil a certain rhetorical purpose (Devitt, 2004). In order to genuinely construct genre analysis, (Deng et al., 2014, pp7 -8) concluded a number of steps which need to be followed. First, a situational context is provided based on the learner's prior knowledge, the text clues, and the world knowledge. Second, the situational context is further analyzed by determining (a) the relationship between the writer and audience and their goals, (b) the social, historical, political aspects of the community in which the discourse occurs, (c) the key linguistic features and the surrounding text in which the discourse appear, and (d) the topic which the text represents. Third, the level of language is determined including the surface features such as lexis and grammar, text patterning and language use, and the organization of the genre in a way that reveals the author's intention.

Genre knowledge enables students to go beyond the written material, its linguistic forms and the processes involved in writing tasks, which helps them to communicate their ideas and establish connections between them and the reader. This implies that the awareness of such genres gives students more opportunities to accomplish their tasks than those who are only involved in specific genres. It also allows students to move from the surface-analysis level to a deep understanding of the text purposes and language use.

Focusing on the shift from surface-level description to the deep analysis of text, Deng et al. (2014, p. 7) maintained that genre analysis comprises three important aspects. The first level, namely the surface-level, refers to the analysis of the linguistic aspects, such as word use, syntactic patterns, and text structure. The second level, which is the sociological concern, refers to understanding how a particular genre is

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organized and what it communicates. Thus, this level is not limited to the explicit meaning of the text, but instead it reveals the purposes, social roles, organizational structures, and cultural diversity. The third aspect, the psychological-cognitive aspect, involves thoughtful answers to the way through which writers of other cultures handle a certain topic.

Thus, genre analysis is essential in describing the generic features necessary to achieve specific communicative purposes. In this respect, teachers can explicitly explain schematic structures of text genres, which may lead to development in genre awareness. Moreover, the concept of genre gives EFL teachers the opportunity to go beyond the written material, elaborate on different writing processes, and extend their linguistic knowledge. It also implies awareness of genre conventions and structures, as well as recognizing the different patterns. Stressing the importance of the purpose of communication, genre can be considered as the key to the social context which is reflected in writing. It is an important element to connect writer, reader, and the context. Teachers should, therefore, employ different genres effectively in order to motivate learners.

In her investigation of the transferability of a genre awareness approach to written compositions, Hill (2012) attempted to find out the extent to which three EFL students elaborate on genre awareness when producing written materials for other classes. Findings showed that all the three students seemed to gain more genre awareness. Their writing experiences enabled them to build on the knowledge they had learnt and allowed them to increase their writing expectations across disciplines.

In their attempt to develop genre awareness, Viriya and Wasanasomsithi (2017) utilized a new writing instruction approach aimed at developing EFL undergraduate students' writing skills. EFL writing tests, genre awareness questionnaires and interviews were used as the tools of the study. Results revealed that the new writing instruction approach had positive effects on students' writings and their genre

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awareness; it enabled them to be aware of how written texts were shaped according to different communicative purposes.

To conclude, the utilization of different writing approaches has recently attracted the interest of researchers in the field of English language teaching and learning. Nevertheless, none of these studies - to the researcher's best knowledge - have shed light on improving students' reflective practices, especially their reflective writing skills. The significance of author-reader relationship, purposes of writing and genre features were also neglected.

III. Methodology

Participants

Sixty sophomore students enrolled in the English section, Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University were chosen as the study sample. The reason behind that choice is that sophomore students are thought to have acquired the main writing skills necessary for university students and have become more familiar with text genres. They were randomly assigned into two groups, i.e. an experimental group and a control one (30 students for each). The average age of the students ranged from 18 to 19 years old. They were all from the same Egyptian culture and had been learning English for 12 years. They were supposed to study the writing course during the second semester of their first year.

Experimental Design

The current study aimed at probing into the impact of the PGA on reflective writing skills and genre awareness. Accordingly, the quasi-experimental design was adopted by using two groups, i.e. the experimental group receiving instruction using the process genre approach and the control one receiving regular instruction. Both groups were exposed to the reflective writing skills test and the genre awareness scale before receiving the instruction, to make sure that both groups were homogeneous in terms of their reflective writing skills and genre

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awareness. The same version of the test and the scale were post-administered to measure the students' level.

Instruments

To fulfil the purpose of the current study, two instruments were designed: the reflective writing skills test (See Appendix B) and the genre awareness scale (See Appendix C). The two instruments were submitted to a panel of jury of specialists and experts in the field of teaching English as a foreign language to determine their validity. In addition, both the test and the scale were piloted on a sample of 30 students other than the study participants to determine the clarity and suitability of the questions and the scale items. For reliability, the test-retest method was used by calculating the internal consistency of the study instruments (alpha coefficient = 0.89).

Study Material

By reviewing the related literature and surveying some previous studies, four units based on the process genre approach were designed in order to develop EFL students' reflective writing skills and genre awareness (See Appendix D). The suggested units aimed at:

1. Developing reflective writing skills of sophomore college students in terms of depth of reflection, use of textual evidence and historical context, language use, and coherence and cohesion.
2. Developing the students' awareness of genre including text structure, purpose, and organization.
3. Identifying different types of text genres.
4. Recognising the structure of different genres.
5. Recognising stages in the writing process.

Content of the Units

The content of the units based on the process genre approach was designed in terms of the intended objectives. It involved four units comprising different tasks and activities as the basis for exploring, analyzing, and producing text genres: narrative, persuasive, expository,

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and descriptive. Each unit dealt with certain reflective writing skills and comprised a particular text genre.

The following procedural stages were followed in the implementation of each unit using the process-genre approach.

a. Preparation

Students were prepared by introducing a situation within a particular genre. They were informed about the topic and were asked to express ideas orally. This activated their schemata and allowed them to anticipate the structure of the specific genre using key questions. Additionally, they practiced different language skills which led them to be familiar with the topic and raised their awareness of text structure.

b. Modeling

In this stage, a model of the genre was presented to students to be deconstructed thoroughly. They were given the chance to understand the schematic structures of the text (i.e., how the text is organized or developed, the linguistic features of the genre, and the purpose for which the text is written).

c. Planning

This stage involved activities that reinforced students' understanding of the genre and activated their schemata, including brainstorming, mind-mapping, web-diagrams, discussions, and reading relevant material.

d. Joint Construction

In the joint construction stage, the students and the instructor worked together to produce their first writing model, which would guide them through their independent writing. The students also contributed ideas and information while the instructor edited and evaluated. They were thus motivated to work in a collaborative environment so as to be ready to work on their own. Moreover, this stage emphasized student-

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student and student- teacher interaction, providing the opportunity for the students to get feedback from their peers or from the instructor. Finally, the instructor wrote the final draft on the board.

e. Independent Construction

Guided by the instructor, the students were asked to write on a certain topic independently. The instructor recommended a topic, or the students chose a topic relevant to the genre provided. The students employed what they had learnt to construct their independent drafts. In other words, they examined the model text to compose their own texts. The instructor, at this stage, could adopt the role of a facilitator, a guide, a coach, and a helper.

f. Revising and Editing

This stage required students to proof-read their final products as well as their peer's. They were able to check and discuss their texts with their fellows, whereas the teacher guided them and evaluated their work. Thus, the final products were then evaluated by the instructor as well as the students. In addition, both peer feedback and teacher-conference feedback were provided. Finally, the instructor published their writings, which might motivate them to be effective writers.

IV. Results

The results of this study are presented in terms of the study hypotheses.

The first hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of their control peers in the post administration of the reflective writing test favoring the experimental group students. Independent Sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores between the experimental group and the control one as shown in table 1.

Table 1

t-test results of the experimental group and the control one in the reflective writing post-test

Dimension	Groups	N	Mean	S.D	t- Value	DF	Sig.																																												
Depth of Reflection	Experimental	30	7.86	1.4	14.8	29	0.001																																												
	Control	30	3.1	1.06				Use of textual evidence and historical context	Experimental	30	8.53	1.38	11.4	29	0.001	Control	30	4.53	1.33	Language use	Experimental	30	6.00	1.017	8.286	29	0.001	Control	30	3.63	1.188	Coherence and Style	Experimental	30	8.833	0.949	10.37	29	0.001	Control	30	5.400	1.544	Total	Experimental	30	31.233	2.299	23.031	29	0.001
Use of textual evidence and historical context	Experimental	30	8.53	1.38	11.4	29	0.001																																												
	Control	30	4.53	1.33				Language use	Experimental	30	6.00	1.017	8.286	29	0.001	Control	30	3.63	1.188	Coherence and Style	Experimental	30	8.833	0.949	10.37	29	0.001	Control	30	5.400	1.544	Total	Experimental	30	31.233	2.299	23.031	29	0.001	Control	30	16.666	2.590								
Language use	Experimental	30	6.00	1.017	8.286	29	0.001																																												
	Control	30	3.63	1.188				Coherence and Style	Experimental	30	8.833	0.949	10.37	29	0.001	Control	30	5.400	1.544	Total	Experimental	30	31.233	2.299	23.031	29	0.001	Control	30	16.666	2.590																				
Coherence and Style	Experimental	30	8.833	0.949	10.37	29	0.001																																												
	Control	30	5.400	1.544				Total	Experimental	30	31.233	2.299	23.031	29	0.001	Control	30	16.666	2.590																																
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	Control	30	16.666	2.590																																															

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Table 1 indicates that the experimental group students outperformed the control group ones in all reflective writing dimensions, where they obtained higher means in all dimensions as compared to those of the control group. The experimental group's mean scores for depth of reflection, using textual evidence and historical context, language use, and coherence and style were 7.86, 8.53, 6.00, and 8.833 respectively. Conversely, the control group obtained lower mean scores for each dimension. The overall t-value was 23.031, which indicates that the difference is significant at (0.001) level. Thus, the first hypothesis is affirmed.

The second hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre-post administration of the reflective writing test favoring post-administration results. Paired Sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the pre and post results of the experimental group as shown in table 2.

Table 2
t-test results of the experimental group in the pre- and post- reflective writing test

Dimensions	Measurement	N	Mean	S.D	t- Value	DF	Sig.	η2	d
Depth of Reflection	Pre	30	2.03	1.03	20.25	29	0.001	0.93	7.289
	Post	30	7.86	1.4					
Use of textual evidence and historical context	Pre	30	2.366	1.098	23.449	29	0.001	0.94	7.916
	Post	30	8.533	1.382					
Language use	Pre	30	2.63	0.868	19.123	29	0.001	0.92	6.782
	Post	30	6.00	1.017					
Coherence and Style	Pre	30	3.00	0.870	29.43	29	0.001	0.96	9.797
	Post	30	8.833	0.949					
Total	Pre	30	10.10	2.17	47.058	29	0.001	0.98	14
	Post	30	31.233	2.299					

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Table 2 indicates that the experimental group students obtained higher means in the post- testing of reflective writing as compared to those of pre-testing. The mean scores of the post-testing for depth of reflection, textual evidence and historical context, language use, and coherence and style were 7.86, 8.53, 6.00, and 8.833 respectively. The t-value of the overall reflective writing was 47.058, which indicates that the difference is significant at (0.001) level. Thus, the second hypothesis is affirmed. The estimated d-value is very high (14), $d > 0.8$, which indicates that the process genre approach has a large effect on developing students' reflective writing skills.

The third hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of their control peers in the post administration of the genre awareness scale favoring the experimental group students. Independent Sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores between the experimental and the control groups as shown in table 3.

Table 3

t-test results of the experimental group and the control one in the genre awareness post-scale

Genre awareness scale	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t. Value	DF	Sig.
Total of scale items	Experimental	30	43.033	2.834	13.398	29	0.001
	Control	30	30.066	4.479			

Table 3 indicates that the mean score of the experimental group (M= 43.03) is higher than that of the control group (M=30.06). The estimated t-value (13.398) is statistically significant at (0.001) level. Thus, the third hypothesis is affirmed. This implies that the process genre approach enhanced students' genre awareness.

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The fourth hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre-post administration of the genre awareness scale favoring post administration results. Paired Sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the pre and post results of the experimental group as shown in table 4.

Table 4
t-test results of the experimental group in the pre- and post- genre awareness scale

Genre awareness scale	Measurement	N	Mean	S.D	t. Value	DF	Sig.	η2	d
Total of scale items	Pre	30	23.466	3.104	42.39	29	0.001	0.9841	15.73
	Post	30	43.033	2.834					

Table 4 indicates that the mean score of the post- testing (M= 43.033) was higher than that of the pre-testing (M= 23.466). The estimated t-value was 42.39, which indicates that the difference is significant at (0.001) level. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is affirmed. The estimated d-value is very high (15.73), $d > 0.8$, which indicates that the process genre approach has a large effect on developing students' genre awareness.

V. Discussion of Results

This study attempted to find out the effect of the process-genre approach within the context of social-constructivist perspective on students' reflective writing skills and genre awareness. The findings show that the process-genre approach is promising in developing students' reflective writing skills and their genre awareness.

According to the post-test scores, the experimental group students outperformed those of the control one in all reflective writing components, with significant improvement in the first two dimensions,

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i.e. depth of reflection, and using textual evidence and historical content. They also showed significant differences in overall genre awareness and its components. This improvement in experimental group students' level could be attributed to having students exposed to the various stages of the process-genre approach. First, they could brainstorm, generate ideas, and link the new concepts with what they already know based on their background knowledge and experiences. Students then were encouraged to analyze the texts during their writing classes. A model text analysis was introduced by the instructor while taking into account the communicative purpose, the writing situation, and the audience. Students could thus analyze text organization, linguistic features, and the purpose for which the text is written. This result is consistent with Gibbons (2002) and Derewianka (2004) who revealed that as a result of being engaged in the modeling stage, students are taught the purposes of the text, its structure, the function of schematic structures, and the language features of the written material.

In the joint constructing stage, students practiced producing different sentence structures that are relevant to a particular genre. They were involved in writing well-organized paragraphs using guiding phrases and questions which reinforced their writing. When writing independently, they chose their own topics; which increased their interest and motivation in writing tasks. Considering the writing situation and background knowledge, students could generate the content, use appropriate knowledge, and produce their own drafts effectively.

Following peer feedback and teacher- student conferencing, students could criticize, evaluate, and reflect on each other's writings. They provided information about the content, text organization, and language use. Peer feedback helped students produce clear, correct, and concise writings through offering guidance regarding the content and the quality of the written work. After every writing task, students were given the chance to exchange their writings to check their work and give feedback. Thus, students could reconstruct their knowledge and analyse their writing processes. They showed a good understanding of the conventions, characteristics, requirements of an essay. This is relevant to the studies conducted by Bijami, 2013; Gao, 2007; and Yaghoubi and

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Ghanei, 2015 that peer feedback helped students enhance their writing skills.

On the other hand, teacher- student conferencing is thought to have helped students to receive more individual remarks, as well as practice a wide variety of skills. The comments given by the instructor were helpful in explaining the mental processes that enabled students to understand why they chose certain information about the topic and why they excluded others. Teacher-student conferencing was conducted when students were asked to present their work to the whole groups. The teacher could also invite individual students to discuss how they planned and produced their final copy of the text. So, they were able to check their progress and were encouraged to complete the tasks efficiently. These results are in agreement with those of Hyland and Hyland (2006) that teacher-student conferencing allowed students to raise questions on their written materials and helped them reconstruct their drafts.

Stressing the social context and the purpose of the text, the process-genre approach allowed students to practice language use related to different genres. This helped them realize the relationship between linguistic features, the social context, and the process in which writing takes place. They could therefore construct texts that fulfil their social goals, elaborate on the ideas presented, and think carefully about their ongoing progress. Besides, they could think deeply from different perspectives to gain a thorough understanding of the written material.

Students were further directed on how to analyze their peers' writings in terms of the language, content, organization, and style. They were allowed more time to plan for their writing and then prepare their first drafts. They were also encouraged to monitor their ideas by asking the instructor or their colleagues to help them plan their essays. Moreover, they were given sample texts and guidelines to help them write well. These results are also similar to those of Assaggaf, 2016; Babalola 2012; Gao, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2005; Rahmi and Soraya, 2015; and Reonal, 2015 who emphasized the role of the process-genre approach in improving students' writing skills.

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In another vein, the experimental group students developed their knowledge of different genres, benefiting from the explicit instruction of genre analysis and modeling. They were involved in collaborative writing tasks with their colleagues and the instructor. Explanations of text structure and text modeling had also been discussed before they individually constructed their own texts. Consequently, students were encouraged to make thoughtful choices when writing, which allowed them to be active constructor of knowledge.

Additionally, genre analysis could allow the students to reveal the similarities and differences between samples of texts, which helped them gain more knowledge on language use and text structure. They tried to investigate different sentence structures and phrases which are used in a particular text genre. Moreover, responses to the scale indicated that they found the knowledge of genre awareness they acquired was useful in dealing with different writing tasks. Generally, this understanding allowed them to be less anxious about producing any written material. This result is consistent with Clark & Hernandez, 2011 and Devitt, 2004 who affirmed that genre awareness assists students to write effectively in other courses and disciplines. It also confirms Beaufort's (2007, p. 188) findings who emphasized the importance of genre knowledge as a mental schema invoked by writers when analyzing new writing tasks. He added that genre knowledge can foster learners' metacognitive reflection.

Meanwhile, the control group showed no significant improvement in terms of their reflective writing skills and genre awareness. They lacked the skills to engage with writing effectively as they did not gain knowledge about how texts function to fulfil different purposes, especially when they encountered a new genre in other college courses. They could not engage in the writing tasks, analyze different genres or link their background knowledge and experiences to what they learn. Furthermore, they did not have any chance to revise their works or conduct discussions with their teacher or peers. The regular instruction they received just focused solely on accuracy and practicing isolated linguistic patterns to the exclusion of the process of writing. Moreover, the students thought in their first language while producing their texts. Hence, they lacked confidence in writing their own texts using the target language independently.

Recommendations

In the light of the study findings, college writing courses should incorporate developing students' reflective practices, especially reflective writing, and enhancing the knowledge of genre structures and conceptions. EFL instructors need to train students to go beyond the written text and extend their knowledge of the language. They should also make use of the PGA in developing their students' reflective writing and genre awareness. Additionally, it should be taken into consideration the different stages of the process genre approach when designing writing materials. The assessment of EFL students' reflective practices as well as their awareness of text genres should comprise an integral part of EFL writing courses.

Suggestions for further research

Based on the results of the present study, the following topics seem worth attempting:

1. Further research is needed to investigate the effect of the PGA on students' academic writing skills and writing self-efficacy.
2. Investigating the relationship between students' genre awareness and their writing proficiency.
3. Further research is needed to find out how the PGA affects students' reflective thinking.
4. Further qualitative research is needed to investigate how genre awareness affects the transferability of writing skills to other academic writing courses.
5. A case study to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs about the use of PGA in teaching writing is needed.

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