

A Workshop of Introducing Genre-based Approach to Teaching Writing in ESL Classroom

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Abstract: This paper designs a workshop to train ESL teachers how to teach an ESL writing class by genre-based approach. The participants are qualified Korean ESL teachers. The workshop is opened with brainstorming of the definition of genre-based approach and followed with the introduction of detailed key features, five stages, main goal, methods, advantages and disadvantages of using genre-based approach to teach writing, with examples of an argumentative and a narrative writing piece. The expected outcomes of the workshop is that participants are able to understand the rationales related to teaching writing as well as plan and give a well-structured ESL writing class respective to different genres and are able to design a ESL writing class of specific genre and put the activities introduced in the workshop in use.

Key Words: Korean English Learners, Genre-based Approach, English Writing Teaching, ESL Classroom, ESL Teaching

ESL 수업에서의 작문 지도에 대한 장르 기반 접근법 소개 워크숍*

왕 해 이**

연구 목적: 이 연구는 장르 기반 접근법을 통해 일정 자격을 갖춘 한국인 ESL 교사들에게 ESL 작문 지도법을 교육하는 워크숍의 설계를 다루고 있다.

연구 방법: 장단점을 논증적 글쓰기와 내러티브 글쓰기의 예시들을 통해 소개하는 순서로 구성된다.

연구 내용: 워크숍은 장르 기반 접근법의 정의에 대한 브레인 스토밍으로부터 시작하여, 작문 교육에서 장르 기반 접근법이 가지는 세부적인 핵심 특징과 다섯 가지 단계, 주요 목표, 방법이다.

결론 및 제언: 이 워크숍을 통해 참가자들이 ESL 작문 지도법과 관련된 사유를 이해하고, 각 장르에 대해 잘 구성된 ESL 작문 수업을 계획하고 실시할 수 있도록 하며, 특정 장르의 ESL 수업에 워크숍에서 소개된 활동들을 활용할 수 있는 효과를 기대한다.

핵심어: 한국인 영어 학습자, 장르 기반 교수법, 영어 쓰기 교육, ESL 수업, ESL 교육

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I. Introduction

Genre-based approach to writing is systematically divided into five stages, the first one is setting the context, during which, the learners figure out the communicative purposes of the targeted writing piece. The second stage is modeling, where students are guided to decide on the style of the language's style and the writing piece's aim. A sample of the same genre might be used as well. The third stage is joint construction, where the second stage's content is reemphasized. The fourth independent construction stage is about getting support from teachers if necessary. The final stage is comparing stage which learners make comparisons between different genres.

The main goal of genre-based writing is not only learning how to complete a writing piece but also learning how to report, how to argue and how to describe. Genre-based approach to writing can be considered as both a process and product approach as it is a method for teaching and learning writing and an introduction to writing itself, which presents both the logical orders and the linguistic features of writing (Wy, 2016). The target students of the participants tend to be less motivated and competitive. Since the genre-based approach to writing provides a specific structure of how to complete a writing piece. As a combination of dependent and independent learning steps, genre-based approach to writing is also a way to promote autonomous learning. Furthermore, argumentative writing, one of the most centered genres of writing, is chosen as an example for the detailed design of the genre-based approach in ESL classroom.

As most Korean students are comparatively less capable of finding the conflicts in a context and putting the arguments logically and sensibly, models of argumentation schemes for presenting students a typical structure of argumentative writing are always considered. For instance, Toulmin's model and Walton's argumentation schemes which are based on the comprehension of argumentative writing while the significant rhetorical model emphasizes the crucial skill of justification. In South Korea, students are not keen on English writing compared to reading and speaking.

Moreover, some universal rules of teaching writing are appropriate for essential writing practice but not specific and authentic for different genres of writing. Therefore, this paper is a designed workshop to train ESL teachers in teaching English writing with brief introduction, comprehensive literature review, and conclusive discussion.

II. Literature Review

1. Genre-based Approach

As writing is categorized by genres and according to the condition that the aim of teaching writing in schools is that the students can conduct writing pieces following the requirements. The focused methodology introduced in the workshop is genre-based approach. In a writing class, the teacher is supposed to have a clear idea of the targeted genre and then be familiar with the academic structure as well as the basic content of the specific genre. The formal structure of each genre for students to understand what they are supposed to write in a specific discourse, while comparatively much less focused on the social features and the content functions. In other words, genre-based approach is aimed to teach students the rudimentary parts of a genre as well as the key features related to the genre so that the students can overcome the difficulty of writing in an appropriate and effective way. What enables a writing piece more convincing than another one. That is to say, the preliminary point is to be sure about one of the key features of a genre: the communicative purpose. They emphasize the professional requirement of students to complete a writing piece in specific academic settings. The functional feature of genres, which combines the linguistic aspects and the social purpose together (Michael, 2004). For instance, the functional feature of a television instruction is commanding. It is elucidated that the social situations of each genre are fully included in the linguistic feature (Michael, 2004). Regardless of the various view of either the academic

structure or the social situation should be considered more prioritized, the centered method used in the genre-based approach is providing students a text model of the targeted taught genre, which gives the student a clear choice of the resources used in the writing piece to meet the appropriate requirements of a specific genre. The schematic model aims to develop the writing skills of students by giving them an instructional guidance. Therefore, in no matter elementary or secondary, students are taught both factual genres and literary genres which are about suggesting and persuading; interpreting and narrating respectively. Along with this, the supporting academic documents are the structure and organization of the genres as well as the common aspects which are appropriate and applicable for each genre (Ken, 2007).

Another up-to-date methodology which amends and innovates the model text method of genre-based approach is LERN (Literacy and Education Research Network project (Michael, 2004)). It is overall divided into three phases: modeling, joint negotiation of the text, independent construction of text, and building knowledge of the field. The main idea is that the communicative purposes, key features as well as the social situations are closely connected with the substance of each genre. Students are expected to have a good command of writing different genres such as argumentation, reports, narration, procedures, and explanation. Similarly, the New Rhetoric approach puts more emphasis on the social circumstances of genres, which promotes the importance of understanding and command of the social purpose in a specific writing piece.

Thus, there are quite a few of advantages of genre-based approach to teaching writing. First and foremost, as students are expected to refer to a schematic model text, it is efficient for them to be familiar with what kind of language they are supposed to conduct and what social purpose they need to respect in the writing piece. Moreover, the rhetorical instruction is a key improvement of students' better understanding towards each genre as it brings the formal academic structure and functional rhetorical effect together. It is beneficial for students to move on to next learning phase by exploring the patterns of genres. The knowledge of model text makes it easier for students to complete their own writing tasks as they have access

to academic references. Compared to the progress of advanced-level learners, intermediate learners benefit more since they are more likely to count on samples which enable them to think critically and broadly based on the guiding methods of writing a specific genre. Meanwhile, students still have the chance to create their own thoughts according to the topic but fix in the provided structure. The final phase that students are expected to break the constraint of fixed structure of genres for bringing the ideas together and understanding thoroughly.

2. The Use of Genre-based Approach in Teaching Writing

The teachers should be aware of is the outcome and feedback that the students show towards the genre-based approach of teaching writing. As experimented, most students improve significantly by classifying the genres that are related to their daily lives which encourage them to get to know the phases and contents. For instance, writing a report of a school event or a cover letter for a job. Moreover, teaching grammars relevant to the functions of the genre is pivotal and it is essential to give students authentic source materials. If teachers can balance the focus of the writing teaching between the genre and grammar skills, which is a highlight of the class. Students should be given the task of completing a few topics of the target genre. The topics chosen should both raise students' interest and be efficient enough for students to improve their writing skills. Meanwhile, the topic must be in the range of students' cognitive knowledge and life values. For example, a topic which is in form of question triggers the critical thinking of students. Furthermore, the contexts of the topic should be heterogeneous, so that the students can relate their writing pieces with various academic and social aspects. However, even students are developing various views, they must promote the precise writing in their writing piece as well, for achieving which, the teachers must give clear and instructional prompt if needed. Therefore, when teachers are planning a genre-based approach writing class, they are encouraged to consider the following aspects: The class is systematic explicit enough for students to refer to the framework of the genre which focuses both on

the linguistic feature and social context; the class is designed based on the learning needs of students; the knowledge is empowering enough for students to use in various genres; the students are motivated to critically think about the resources chosen for the discourses; the teachers are supporting and advising the students to learn and create writing pieces based on genres.

As an example, teaching argumentative writing involves several steps as follows (Wy, 2016). First, for all students, whether creative and talented in writing or not, it is necessary to show them examples of the goal genre of writing. During the mentor's argumentative texts reading process, students are asked to compare and conclude the texts before finding the method and evidence the author uses to support their arguments as the basic logic. Second, another creative way of teaching argumentative writing is that, rather than writing down arguments, most students should be able to argue orally (Swales, 1990). One of the practical activities is to give students an argumentative topic and ask them to debate first, during which students naturally build up arguments and evidence. The kinds of debate activities used in the classroom can be freestyle debate or pre-debate research, following a step-by-step approach to teaching argumentative writing. Then the major part is to introduce the students the task. In this phase, teachers are supposed to give students a clear parameter of what is expected to be written in the assignment. As a sample, the model text is provided to students along with the detailed explanation and analysis of the grammar features, communicative purpose, and academic structure of the argumentative genre. The next step is to teach students to pre-write the argumentative essay which requires them to build a base of the draft. The students are guided to plan the overall structure and argumentative statements during the pre-writing period. At the same time, teachers oversee giving feedback and guidance on their plan. As the approach used is based on genre, for argumentative genre, it is essential to give relevant and persuasive evidence, support the argument with applicable evidence, cite correct sources and meet the need of audience.

As another example, teaching narrative writing is based on the steps discussed as following. Before teaching students, teachers need to figure out which kind of the

targeted narrative writing it is: personal narratives which actually happen or short stories which are made up by themselves. It is always not significantly challenging for students to tell stories but difficult for them to narrate based-on a centered topic (Nagao, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to teach by scaffolding method: ask the students to narrate what they plan to write first and help them to generate a topic based on the ideas. Secondly, the key point of teaching narrative writing is the structure of the story, which is categorized in 6 parts. As it is shown that in a story, students need to give specific and clear narrations of the following: exposition (the background of the protagonist in daily life), conflict (the factors that create the protagonist a problem), rising action (the more intensive and sequent things happen which result in the conflict), climax (the turning point of the story which is the most exciting part), falling action (the things happen after the climax), and resolution (the ending).

One of the key features of genre-based approach in teaching writing is to provide students a schematic text as a parameter. Next, for conducting the narrative writing with a standardized structure, teachers should encourage students to map their story by the steps of a story and write a quick draft. Another highlight of the story is the pacing. Students are supposed to add more moments on some dramas and shrink some plots in case the narrative writing drags. Therefore, it is crucial that the teachers give understandable explanation and example of how to shape the details of the narrative writing.

The discussions of how to teach argumentative and narrative writing above are about the teaching processes and content before the students conduct their own writing pieces. After the writing assignments are completed, they are encouraged to receive suggestions from both the teachers and their peer classmates. The feedback classes can be designed into various mini-lessons as it is important for students to know what they need to improve and what are the strong-comings in their writing pieces. If in a lecture, it is not practical to give detailed and tailored feedback to every student, teachers can give one-to-one tutor to students. For example, for lower-intermediate students, teachers should pay more attention to the grammar of

the writing pieces as they are improving their basic linguistic knowledge. However, this can be time-consuming and teachers, by co-learning method which means students are also able to get suggestions from peer classmates. Computer feedback such as ICT and Grammarly is one of the methods of feedback as well. Recently, portfolio is also a rising approach to receive a well-organized and detailed. Moreover, the choice of different forms of feedback is based on different genre, as an example and practice in the activity (Tribble, 1996).

III. Workshop

1. Participants and Materials

The participants are ESL teachers at Korean schools. For the English writing level of the participants' students are intermediate or advanced, most participants are assumed to be English teachers at secondary schools or colleges. Their English level must be examined and qualified by English test certificates such as IELTS, TOEIC, and TOFEL. They are officially licensed as English teachers after taking a series of exams and interviews to obtain Korean English teacher certificates. They are quite familiar with the theories related to education, such as the teacher's profession, from the aspect of psychology and educational law, as they must remember the relevant points of knowledge to pass examinations for their qualification as a teacher, because of which they have overall command of the theoretical basis of being a teacher. Some of them may lack theoretical knowledge practice, but some of them may have practiced in the classroom. Participants are also expected to be trained to design and lead a class for both teacher interviews and real school teaching (Halliday, 1978). Either they may come to the workshop with questions and problems they encounter during the teaching process, or they are novice teachers who attend the workshop to anticipate the problems of teaching and find solutions. Potential ESL teachers who still lack English writing practice or are currently studying ESL teaching may also

participate. They are comparatively inclined to participate in a teaching workshop on critical thinking. The materials provided should be tailored and appropriate. Therefore, the materials used are mostly digital and papery. The main tool is the power point, which presents the outline of the theories and practices in the workshop. The power point gives the participants a reference to take notes and provides the lecturer a hint of speech. All the handouts and videos shown are from official and authoritative journals and websites. For example, the text in the first task paper is adapted from a magazine tailored for ESL students since the target students of the participants are studying English as a second language as discussed before. Along with that, the blanks in the handout for the participants to finish are designed according to the academic structure of an argumentative writing piece which is the key focus of the teaching. Moreover, showing a video is the most direct and effective way to present in the workshop for the segment of theories related to feedback.

In a nutshell, the workshop is planned in the following steps: choosing a useful and practical topic: genre-based approach in teaching writing; identifying the profile of the participants and goals; planning the activities for getting the participants involved; paraphrasing and concluding the related theories and methodologies presented; selecting suitable resources and make the materials (Rogers, 2005).

2. Detailed Tasks in the Workshop and Rationale

The lead-in part of the workshop aims to present the participants an overall idea of the definition of writing which benefits the participants to engage effectively in the following activities and think critically based on the academic knowledge. The profile of the participants can be experienced teachers, therefore, they might know how to design a class to teach writing but not sure about the detailed definition of writing. For a better writing class with enhanced organization and appropriate content, the participants need to understand the supportive theories related to the definition of writing. To enlighten their brainstorming, firstly, they are given possible examples of

writing, such as a drama script, a poem, and a TOFEL writing task. Then the participants are encouraged to think more, that is, drawing a concept map of their ideas on the definition of writing and share their ideas together with their group members, which is the first activity in the workshop that promote the interaction between the participants and the lecturer (Alister, 1998). The method of concept map can be used in the participants' writing class as well, for example, to teach an expository writing class, students can be led to draw a concept map first. Then the lecturer shows some of the group works and give feedback and conclusion. For more theoretical lecture talk, it is discussed in the previous review research part.

The next part of the workshop is introducing the detailed key features, five stages, main goal, methods, advantages and disadvantages of the genre-based approach of teaching writing. As an example, a piece of argumentative writing about school choice is given to the participants to complete the task of filling the blanks in the following as a conducting an argumentative writing teaching experiment by genre-based approach on themselves.

<Table 1> Task Paper of the Workshop (1)

Topic of the essay: <u>school choice is a bad idea</u>	
Opposition	Refutation
School choice allow <u>parents freedom to select best education disregarding the income.</u>	
School choice seek <u>to improve public education.</u>	School choice damage <u>public education as a whole.</u>
Argument	Evidence
The danger: <u>large corporations specializing in opening and operating charter schools.</u>	Privatization of public schools: <u>Green Dot and KIPP.</u>
School is more about <u>profit</u> than <u>education.</u>	
Conclusion	
Public schools should not <u>be eroded by charter schools.</u>	
Public schools suffer from lack of <u>proper funding.</u>	

The task work, as a model text, is a method of teaching the students a specific genre by analyzing the academic structure first. The aim of the task is that the participants can get the gist of the arguments in the essay and define the role of each structure. Importantly, the sub-aim of the task is that the participants can get experience from “doing what the students do” for improvement and design of their own writing class. The lecturer should be ready for any questions related to procedures and contents of the task.

As another example of putting genre-based approach into use is introducing how to teach narrative writing and the teaching focus is the structure: exposition; conflict; rising action; climax falling action; and resolution. To prove that the structure works for the effectiveness of conducting a narrative writing piece, the participants are given three topics and choose one to write and discuss their structure draft with group members. The three topics are listed as following:

1. Describe the best or worst experience you have ever had in school.
2. Describe a difficult decision you had to make.
3. Describe a childhood experience that helped you grow up.

The challenging points would be the time limitation of completing the structure writing. Due to the various English teaching and knowledge level of the participants, it is crucial to make sure the participants finish the task and give feedback to each other at the same pace. For exploring more of how to give effective feedback to students, the participants are given another handout which is a narrative writing piece about the most embarrassing thing happened, to practice giving feedback to students.

<Table 2> Task Paper of the Workshop (2)

The most embarrassing moment in my life that I can remember was on the music festival in my high school. It was an annual event that every student was looking forward to, so a lot of people came to the stadium where the festival took place. I was the guitarist in my band. Before we went up to the stage, I was very nervous and even trembled. I told myself everything would be fine but what happened next was not. After we were all ready plugging in our musical instruments, I suddenly found that the people who oversaw the

equipment did not put microphone in front of me. I should have just call someone to do that but instead, I was so anxious that I headed down the stage and wanted to the microphone myself. I did not realize there were cables everywhere on the stage, so I tripped and fell over on the stage. Everyone at the audience was watching me and I felt that no matter how cool I would be later when I played the guitar, everyone would only think about how tripped myself. From then on, I knew that the nervousness would help nothing, only if we believe ourselves and take it easy, can we manage to get what we want.

According to this student's work, the participants are supposed to design an outline of the feedback they are giving to students using the method of one-to-one appointment. For example, as for the email provided above, the participants are supposed to give feedbacks from the aspects of structure, grammar, punctuation, content and spelling. A video of a one-to-one feedback is shown and the participants are required to pay attention to the reaction between the student and the teacher. The participants should not only think critically about the content and structure of the feedback but also the psychological effect that the feedback plays on the student. For instance, the teacher address the strong points first and be careful about the words used for pointing out the shortcomings in the writing piece. As for this student's work about narrating a most embarrassing moment, the key point of the feedback should be the structure. The teachers are supposed to evaluate the whole essay with a reference to the right structure of a narrative writing piece.

3. Outcomes of the Workshop

The workshop's central focus is to develop the participants' professional ability to teach a writing course based on the different genres through an interpretation of expert experiences and knowledge. The expected results of the workshops can be both theoretical and practical. First and foremost, the theories of the workshop provide a clarified definition of writing that allows participants to think critically based on different types of writing and writing processes that can promote their capacity to design the class by following academic instructions. Secondly, the basic method of

teaching genre-based writing is introduced, for example, how to teach argumentative and narrative writing. Since the main part of the workshop is to allow participants to brainstorm themselves first, the combination of theory and practice can inform participants of their writing class plan. The writing session gives the participants an academic view, which is not an altered topic of writing practice, but a professional structure, to better design the writing task that the participants can give the students in the writing class. Additionally, participants are more familiar with the student feedback process.

IV. Conclusion

It is acknowledged broadly that writing is one of the most challenging and demanding field in ESL education for both students to complete writing tasks and teachers to teach writing classes in Korea. Therefore, this paper focuses on one of the most innovated and effective methodology that used in teaching writing: genre-based approach. For disseminating this method, a workshop is designed, and the participants expected to attend the workshop are either experienced or unexperienced teachers, but they are all exploring the gist of teaching writing. The outcome as well as the aim of the workshop, is that the participants can teach writing by genre-based approach and put the activities in use. Instead of introducing the method directly, the workshop begins with defining writing, which lays a solid theoretical foundation. And the focus of the introduction of the workshop is the specific methods in genre-based approach of teaching writing, the advantages, and disadvantages of genre-based approach as well as the methodology of teaching argumentative and narrative writing. At last, the point of giving feedback to students is discussed based on the genre-based approach as well.

The workshop not only improves participants' understanding of the theory, but also helps them to anticipate and introduce potential materials, strategies and techniques that can be used in writing class and problems that may occur in classroom research.

In addition, the workshop also motivates and encourages participants to share their ideas and problems with peer teachers who have their own insights on improving a writing class's creative and critical design using a genre-based approach. Collegiality can also be improved as they have the task of socially interacting in groups before returning to the classroom with a passion and a new sense of teaching.

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