

Promoting EFL Writing Skills Using a Web-Mediated Process Genre Approach among EFL Majors at Faculties of Education

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Abstract

The current study investigated the effects of a suggested Web-Mediated Process Genre (WMPG)-based Program on developing the writing skills of EFL majors. Participants were third year EFL majors enrolled in Sohag Faculty of Education. The two-group post-assessment design was utilized in the experiment, (N=23) for the experimental group and (N=23) for the control group. Materials and instruments of research included a test of EFL writing skills (WT) and the suggested WMPG-based program. The experiment was conducted at the beginning of the first term of academic year 2017-2018. The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post- WT in favor of the experimental group. These results revealed that the suggested WMPG-based Program brought about significant gains in the writing performance of participants. Therefore, the suggested WMPGA-based program was recommended to be integrating into EFL writing instruction.

Key words: EFL writing- process genre approach – Web-mediated writing instruction

Introduction

Writing is a fundamental skill in language learning; it is also a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practice on the learner's part to reach an acceptable level of writing performances. In addition, writing plays an important role in EFL prospective teachers' personal and professional lives.

A skillful written communication is critical to the demonstration of what has been learned. Considering the importance of EFL writing, Dietsch (2009) argued that writing well is a skill that can sharpen thinking skills, open new opportunities to learn, nurture personal development, help establish relationships, and foster success in college and the workplace.

Writing as an integral skill in foreign language learning (FLL) settings plays a predominant role in language learning. In this regard, Alfaki (2015) argued that a good deal of writing in the English language classroom is undertaken as an aid to learning; for example, to consolidate the learning of new structures or vocabulary or to help students remember new items of language. In this context, writing allows students to see their progress and get feedback from the teacher and allows teachers to monitor students and diagnose problem encountered. Accordingly, EFL learners should master the written form of language and learn certain structures which are important for effective written communication.

Due to the increased emphasis on EFL writing skills, much revived writing research has been conducted to determine the factors that could contribute positively or negatively to the development of EFL writing, on the one hand. For example, Quintero (2008) pointed out that problems with grammar, punctuation, and lexical choice have a negative impact on the content and the general understanding of a text. In addition, he indicates that writing is a complicated skill to develop since it implies the use of mental processes rather than only using the structures of the language. In Urrutia and

Medina's study (2011), there are many learners who need to express their ideas in a foreign language, but they find themselves without the linguistic resources to carry it out. This means that they are not acquiring knowledge correctly, so they can't write well in English.

On the other hand, other research is oriented directly to develop EFL writing skills using various approaches and strategies. Ismail (2001) developed the creative writing skills using the integrated product-process model. The results of Hasan and Akhand (2010) confirmed that the combination of product and process enhance the writing proficiency of EFL learners and it presents a corroborating evidence to support the view that the blend of both approaches tends to facilitate the learners to undertake a writing task to be developed and finally, the advantages of using a product-process approach to gauge the effects of writing tasks are appraised. Alharbil(2017) confirms that the common, time-honored, language-based, process-based, and genre-based approaches to teaching writing tend to troubleshoot only certain specific problems related to the teaching of EFL writing.

Considering the aforementioned factors and the investigated integrated writing approaches, there is usually a large gap

between the writing skills taught in school and the writing processes required for achieving writing success. As writing is one of the most highly cognitive skills, its success is not a talent. Hence, EFL writing cannot be learned and acquired naturally. EFL writing constitutes implied cognitive and thinking skills that adhere to the learners' abilities and potentials as well. L1 interference and lack of genre knowledge could contribute to a great extent in the poor writing performance of EFL learners. Giving due care to error-free written products and focusing EFL writing practices on just formal genres with intended social purposes promote the sophisticated writing that may not be encountered in real life beyond the class.

Accordingly, writing instruction should take the form of a process through which students are engaged in recursive stages of development until they write polished written products. In this context, Helwa (2014) argued that "learning to write a text efficiently is a long process that requires much practice and sometimes explicit instruction. The act of writing creates an environment for the development of cognitive and organizational strategies whereby students link new concepts with familiar ones" (p.25).

Hence, it can be concluded that there is an actual need to focus, in writing instruction, not only on the written product, but also on the writing processes that should be followed during writing. The process approach (PA) of writing emphasizes the stages of the writing process as well as the writer's individual and independent production. Importantly, it examines how writers create, compose, and revise ideas in order to generate a text (Hyland, 2003a). Teachers in the process classroom should leave learners ample free space to express their own personal meanings. To aid this sense of free space, various types of feedback are adopted for revision including peer review and teacher-student conference (Zeng, 2005).

The effectiveness of the process approach in teaching writing has been validated in many studies (Ismail, 2001; Ho, 2006; Yeung, 2008; Satjapiboon&Chuchart, 2010; Dilidüzgün, 2013; Mohamed, 2017). However, the process of writing has drawbacks. According to Badger and White (2000), it ignores the variety and differentiation of the process of writing in particular social contexts and the fact that certain texts are produced for specific communication purposes. Most cognitive views seem to view writing as an isolated process in which it begins with the writer's

previous knowledge and perspectives about the world. Nevertheless, most writings, particularly academic/professional writing, begin with the knowledge the writer has obtained and processed from other sources. Frequently, this integration takes place between reading and writing as the writer takes other written texts as sources of information (Mayora, 2009).

By adopting the genre approach (GA) in EFL writing instruction, the integration between reading and writing is highly promoted and enhanced. It is what happens when students are asked to analyze the linguistic and discourse features of model texts. This stage is called, in genre-based approach, *modeling* through which students are exposed to different texts of various genres of writing and they are also asked to analyze the presented genre to identify the required norms and forms that should be followed during writing in the presented genre.

The genre-based approach emphasizes the importance of exploring the social and cultural context of language use on a piece of writing. The context decides the purpose of a text, an overall structure of a text in terms of language features and text features often in the form of linguistic conventions (Hammond & Derewianka (cited in Derewianka, 2003);

Hyon, 1996). This approach argues that students can only produce a composition to be successfully accepted by a particular English language community once they take the context of a text into account.

A genre-based approach to writing instruction looks beyond subject content, composing processes and linguistic forms to see a text as attempts to communicate with readers. " This approach is concerned with teaching learners how to use language patterns to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose writing. Its central belief is that we do not just write, we write something to achieve some purpose" (Hyland, 2003 b: 18). In this approach, student writers are requested to take the overall social purposes of a text into account when composing a text.

Vivid research has echoed the valuable benefits of genre-based writing instruction and linked it with creating writing strategies as scaffolding strategy. In addition, some of these studies recommend genre approach as a source to richer language input which, in turn, results in better performance in learners' revised writings (Paltridge, 2001; Widodo, 2006; Ahn, 2012; Yang & Zhang, 2010). However, the emergence of genre theory does not attempt to replace or suggest abandoning the process approach to writing but draws on the demand for a more balanced

approach to teaching ESL/EFL writing (Kim and Kim, 2005).

As mentioned above, both process writing and genre-based pedagogy have attempted, in their different ways, to take the learning and teaching of writing into a new territory. They both seek to empower student writers by making their writing more relevant and meaningful. But, as these approaches are enacted in classroom practice, they are criticized for separating writing from the full range of activities in which students are engaged and for a tendency to make writing an end in itself rather than seeing it as a means of achieving larger social and intellectual goals that are of genuine interest to the writers.

Within web-based writing activities, students can contribute in a way that is socially appropriate and accurate enough to communicate their ideas to an extended audience (Lamon, 2005). Asynchronous writing activities are also more student-centered because they promote interaction between students and offer plenty of space for creative and reflective processes (Godwin-Jones, 2006), thus helping teachers create a shared learning experience where students can support each other's learning. This goes hand in hand with what Anson (1999) says about the teaching of writing:

"The teaching of writing, unlike some other disciplines is founded on the assumption those students learn well by reading and writing with each other, responding to each other's drafts, negotiating revisions, discussing ideas, sharing perspectives, and finding some level of trust as collaborators in their mutual development" (p. 269). Another positive aspect of asynchronous writing activities is that students have more time than in oral discussions to react and formulate their contributions before they hear their colleagues' views and ideas (Salmon, 2002).

Accordingly, it seems so imperative to find new approaches of teaching writing which embrace the potential of technology whereby students can be provided with ample scaffolds (reading models, interactive essay maps, joint writing activities, peer response, revising checklists, discussion forums, and organized asynchronous feedback). A web-mediated PG-based program is suggested, in the present study, to develop writing skills.

Context of the problem

The results of previous research tackling writing instruction in EFL contexts reveal certain writing difficulties and challenges that are encountered by EFL learners. For example, Ahmed (2011) identifies the essay writing difficulties encountered by the

Egyptian student teachers of English at the Faculty of Education from both students and their teachers' perspectives such as planning difficulties; organizational difficulties including coherence and cohesion; stylistic difficulties; lexical problems; and technical difficulties including grammar, punctuation, spelling, revision, and editing.

Similarly, Abu Rass (2015) lists the aspects of writing difficulties encountered by non-native speakers, as follows (1) providing supporting details including examples and reasons is not fully mastered; (2) the style of English is not completely acquired, i.e. some students continue transferring the style of Arabic writing; and (3) developing a cohesive paragraph using the right coordinators and transition words needs a lot of practice.

EFL students, particularly Arab ones, usually transfer the stylistic features of Arabic as their first language. For example, they tend to write long sentences with coordinating conjunctions (Younes & Albalawi, 2015), repeat themselves, and argue through presentation and elaboration (Almehmadi, 2012). According to Helwa (2015), when EFL learners exchange their thoughts in an overt and reciprocal negotiation of meanings, in written discourse, the writer has to communicate with an absent

audience. He has to represent both roles; the writer's and the reader's. Thus, the writer has to be more precise in expressing his thoughts. This precision requires an expense of effort that makes it usually difficult for a writer to get thoughts on paper.

To investigate these writing difficulties of the third-year EFL majors at Sohag Faculty of Education, a pilot study was conducted by the researcher in which an EFL writing test was administered on twenty students of the third-year EFL majors at Sohag Faculty of Education (see Appendix, A). At the EFL writing test, the students were asked to write about two topics (one of them is writing about a personal experience and the other is writing a proposal argument). Then, their writings were analyzed using an analytical scoring rubric and their aspects of poor performance in writing were identified as shown in table (1).

It is apparent from the results included in table (1) that the third year EFL majors at Sohag Faculty of Education had poor performance of writing skills (content, organization, style, mechanics, and revision). In addition, the researcher conducted an interview with some EFL majors at the third-year at Sohag Faculty of Education (see Appendix, A) in an effort to explore their knowledge of some linguistic structures of

certain genres, to what extent they followed recursive process of writing, whether web-based facilities are integrated in their EFL writing class, and finally are their autonomous skills were taken into consideration before, during, and after writing. Results indicated that third-year EFL majors have limited class experiences in the stages of writing the different genres.

Difficulties in writing of different genres may come from the fact that writers lack the knowledge of the linguistic features of these different written genres (Ahmed, 2010; Tuan, 2011). Moreover, being able to write

cohesively according to the conventions of a specific academic context is even harder for EFL students to accomplish. In addition, they declared that they have little exposure to certain written models of genres which are actually demanded in their lives as resume, (CV), formal emails, responsive essays...etc. All the concern of writing instruction was upon error-free products of student writings, so the how of writing experiences were limited. Actually, third-year EFL majors did not practice web-based instruction synchronously or asynchronously. Few lecturers guided them to some writing links.

Table (1) Students' Scores in the Pilot EFL Writing Skills Test

EFL Writing components	Aspects of EFL writing errors	3 and 4 marks	1 and 2 marks
Content (unity, coherence, and cohesion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrelevant ideas Improper suitable referents, ellipsis, and conjunctions Illogically sequenced sentences related to the major focus of genre. 	14%	86%
Organization (Introduction, methods of development, and Conclusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden shift from one paragraph to another without logical development The pattern of introduction, methods of development, and conclusion is lost, most of the samples took the form of just one short paragraph, not an essay. Hook techniques are lost in the introduction. 	20%	80%
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improper use of diction No appeals (pathos or logos) 	8%	92%
Mechanics and revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of grammatical errors, No focused punctuation and spelling. Rare evaluation of the ideas, no focused and comprehensible summary. 	40%	60%

Statement of the problem

The problem of the present research lies in that third-year English section students lack EFL writing skills.

Questions of the study

The present study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the effect of the suggested on developing the writing skills of third-year EFL majors?
2. What are the features of the Web-Mediated PG-Based Program (WMPGP)?

Hypothesis of the study

The current study tests the following hypothesis:

- There is a statistically significant difference between mean scores of the experimental group students and the control group ones in the post-test of their EFL writing skills in favor of the experimental group.

Definition of Terms

• EFL Writing Skills

Writing is a whole process which goes through different steps. It is not merely limited to express thoughts via written symbols, but also a tool for learning as it is reported by Kate and Guy (2003, p. 1480).

Grape and Kaplan (1996) explored the meaning of writing in terms of the rhetorical triangle in writing. Such triangle consists of the reader, the recipient of the final product of the writing process, the writer, the originator of the message, the subject matter, and the text itself.

In the present study, EFL writing skills can be defined as "skills required for producing a piece of writing including: (grammar and word choice), content, organization, stylistic, mechanics, and revision skills.

Process-Genre Approach

"This approach allows students to study the relationship between purpose and form for a particular genre as they use the recursive processes of prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing. It develops students' awareness of different text types and of the composing process. The different activities included in this approach ensure that grammatical and vocabulary items are taught not in isolation, but in meaningful, interactive situations and derived from the particular genre" (Badger and White, 2000).

Web-Mediated Instruction

Web-based Instruction (WBI) is a hypermedia-based instructional program which utilizes the attributes and resources of the Internet and the World Wide Web to

facilitate the development of interactive electronic learning processes and curriculum materials, creating a more meaningful learning environment (Uparimpanich, 2008).

Review of Literature

Maximizing the ability of writing coherent and well-organized written genres should be the main objectives of both EFL teachers and learners, especially at the university level where most of the students may face great problems in completing their writing productions. Chen (2000) defined EFL writing as "the ability to discover what one wishes to say and convey one's message through language, syntax and content that are appropriate for one's audience and purpose" (p.19). At the university level, EFL majors have to produce good pieces of writing in an academic way with a formal style. EFL writing practices can be an individual, personnel, and social endeavor (Richards & Renanya, 2003). Therefore, EFL learners should master the graphic symbols of language to use them productively in a certain social context individually or collaboratively.

Therefore, writing, as a concept, is more related to the social context. Muñoz (2006:156) described writing as "process of individual in a particular social context". In

this definition, there is an assert that learning to write is not just a question of developing a set of mechanical orthographic skills but it also involves learning a new set of social relations. Consequently, writing is a means of communication by which one can express his/ her thoughts using symbols that are introduced into words.

Oshima and Hogue's thought evoked the emergence of dealing with writing as a process. In this regard, Harmer (2007) argued that "writing is a process that is, the stage the writer goes through in order to produce something in its final form" (p.4). According to him, this process of writing has four main categories which are: planning, drafting, editing, and final draft. Richards & Schmidt (2002) also supported this idea where they claimed that "writing is viewed as a result of a complex process of planning, drafting, reviewing, and revising" (p.526). That is, the final product is the result of various actions. Because writing is a whole process which goes through certain steps, it is not also limited to express thoughts via the graphic symbols of language.

To conclude, EFL writing is not an easy skill to be acquired naturally without learning. Moreover, writing is not just an orthographic representation of symbols on paper, it is rather a process through which

certain stages are followed respectively. Accordingly, it can be conceptualized as a thinking process, a social process, and a problem-solving process.

Each writing genre is a craft of processes represented in the proper utilization of certain generic structures that appeal to a certain purpose and audience wherein the teacher can provide students with appropriate scaffolds within. As an EFL teacher, there is a set of skills you wish your students to develop, and in case you haven't yet your first step, above all, is to define these skills. Then, you decide which teaching strategies, exercises, or activities will help them develop these skills. Finally, you should choose a specific topic to ensure that students will participate with enthusiasm. That is why, EFL writing is a craft.

Reviewing research, the nature of EFL writing is multifaceted. The term 'writing' refers both to an act and the result of that act. This was confirmed by Swales 1990 who clarified that acquiring EFL writing has two possible perspectives: learning the process of composing and learning the form and organization of the product. However, writing also has a social dimension and purpose, which can lead to other perspectives focusing on genre, voice, and audience. Therefore, EFL writing instruction should

deal with writing as a genre, a process and finally as a product, rather than as only a product. To elaborate, Lipson et al. (2000) stated that conventional approaches to writing were criticized for focusing too strongly on the products versus the process of writing and for neglecting to develop in students either a sense of ownership or a sense of purpose and audience.

Considering the nature of EFL writing and the aspects of its complexities, the integration of the process approach for writing instruction and the genre approach should be validated. Much research attempts to ascertain the process-based approach to writing instruction, while others support genre-based approach. Still, others validate and promote the importance of integrating both of them.

Typically, the teaching procedure for the PGA is divided into the following six steps: (1) preparation, (2) modeling and reinforcing, (3) planning, (4) joint constructing, (5) independent constructing, and (6) revising. A short description of the six steps can be illustrated, as follows (Badger and White, 2000).

1. Preparation

The teacher begins preparing the students to write by defining a situation that requires a written text and placing it within a specific

genre, e.g. an authentic essay arguing for or against an issue of current interest. This activates the schemata and allows students to anticipate the structural features of this genre.

2. Modeling and reinforcing

At this stage, the teacher introduces a model of the genre and lets students consider the social purpose of the text, including who the audience will be. For example, the purpose of an argumentative essay is to persuade the reader to act on something. Next, the teacher discusses how the text is structured and how its organization develops to accomplish its purpose. The students may do some comparisons with other texts to reinforce what they have learned about the particular genre. Chamey and Carlson (1995) define a model as “a text written by a specific writer in a specific situation that is subsequently reused to exemplify a genre that generalizes over writers in such situations” (p.89).

3. Planning

In this step, many meaningful activities activate the students’ schemata about the topic, including brainstorming, discussing, and reading associated material. The aim is to help the students develop an interest in the topic by relating it to their experience. Alameddinea and Mirzab (2016) promoted using essay template as a scaffold in the

prewriting stage to improve learner's academic writing.

4. Joint Constructing

During this step, which facilitates later independent composing, the teacher and students work together to begin writing a text. While doing so, the teacher uses the writing processes of brainstorming, drafting, and revising. The students share information and ideas, and the teacher writes the generated text on the blackboard or computer. The final draft provides a model for students to refer to when they work on their individual compositions.

5. Independent constructing

At this point, students have examined model texts and have jointly constructed a text in the genre. They now undertake the task of composing their own texts on a related topic. Class time can be set aside for students to compose independently so that the teacher is available to help, clarify, or consult about the process. The writing task can be continued as a homework assignment.

6. Revising

Students eventually have a draft that undergoes final revision and editing. This does not necessarily mean that teachers have to collect all the papers and mark them one by one. Students may check, discuss, and evaluate their work with fellow students, as

the teacher again guides and facilitates. There are two kinds of revising: Local-scale level (revise for grammar, punctuation, and mechanics) and Global-scale level (revise for content, organization, voice, and purpose).

With discussing the key features of teaching practices involved in each stage of PGA, major concerns could be concluded:

1. Students benefit from front-loaded, explicit instruction in the purpose, patterns of organization, and linguistic resources expected in the target genres.
2. Models of successful (and sometimes unsuccessful) texts in the target genre should be read, evaluated, and analyzed.
3. The teacher, as an expert, can provide effective modeling of the process of producing texts in the target genre.
4. Student engagement with and interaction over texts in the target genre and the writing strategies needed to write them are necessary precursors to individual writing.
5. All learners benefit from “genre knowledge”: an understanding that genres exist, vary, and matter. This may be realized through a focus on evaluative criteria, social purpose, and/or differences among target genres.

Going through the stages of PGA mentioned above helps teachers shift

responsibility gradually to their students once they get familiar with the different processes of composing needed to produce a text meeting the requirements of a particular genre. Consequently, it is clear that a synthesis between process-based approach and genre-based approach model is required to best facilitate the teaching of writing in order to ensure the highest possible written products. When implementing PGA, teachers should be aware of the following three general guidelines: As writing is so difficult, the teacher should adopt the role of assistant and guide and work closely with students to encourage them and offer helpful feedback and suggestions. It is crucial for teachers to offer positive and constructive advice on what students have written. Teachers also can make efforts to arouse curiosity and self-confidence by matching student interests to the writing topic and they should be sensitive to any individual differences that arise in the writing process.

Teachers should directly train students about writing strategies. If teachers demonstrate how prewriting activates the schemata and outline strategies for the drafting and revision processes, students will be more successful in writing compositions. Teachers should include the listening, speaking, and reading skills in the writing

class. Integrating the four language skills promotes the expansion of the students' overall language competence. PGA makes this feasible, as background material is read during prewriting activities, and speaking and listening occur during lectures and when giving or receiving feedback. (Yan, 2005:20).

Following Yan's principles in utilizing PGA promotes integrating the four language skills for teaching one of them. So, teaching writing can be enhanced by listening, speaking, and reading activities. The importance of reading skills for teaching writing is highly validated in PGA as it represents the language input for analyzing genres and for gathering input in the prewriting stage.

Process-Genre Approach (PGA) is based on social learning theory and genre theory for organizing and scaffolding writing instruction that sequences instruction in such a way that teachers can model both product (the genre of focus) and process. Social learning theory (Vygotsky cited in Read, 2010) suggests that students learn best when learning is situated in a context in which they interact with each other and the teacher in meaningful, purposeful ways. Genre theory promotes an inquiry approach where many examples of a genre are examined, and teachers and students together analyze their

features to construct a definition that is accessible to students.

Once students have experienced examples of the genre, the teacher can model writing that genre and engage students in shared writing of the genre. Then, students are more likely ready to write independently. If the same genre is encountered again, less scaffolding will be necessary. However, if a new genre is introduced, the sequence can be repeated (Daniels, 2001). An important aspect of scaffolding instruction is that the scaffolds are temporary. As the learner's abilities increase the scaffolding provided by the more knowledgeable other is progressively withdrawn. Finally, the learner is able to complete the task or master the concepts independently (Sung & Chen, 2002).

Aziz (2015) investigated the effect of teacher's scaffolding with teaching writing process on improving students' writing skills. The study concluded that students' achievement in the post-test compared to the pre-test revealed significant improvement. Also, scaffolding students' writings through writing process approach met the students' needs in EFL writing which improved their writing skill, while most of them had difficulty in the basic elements of writing, e.g. grammar. In addition, learners could

more confidentially express their ideas in their writings.

Teaching writing, that combines the process and genre approaches, constitutes knowledge about the genre product with the opportunity to plan, draft, revise, and edit work in order to identify the criteria against which the evaluation of the teachers' methodology for teaching writing skills was used (Heather and Evans, 1998). However, for some authors in the field, these two approaches are sometimes contradictory in some areas, it would be beneficial to look for ways in which they can complement each other rather than ways in which they are in opposition (Badger & White, 2000). While the process approach is associated with freedom, self-expression, and creativity where students generate ideas, plan, draft, and edit (White & Arndt, 1991), the genre approach involves the use of model texts or schematic structures on which students are expected to base their works (Gee, 1997).

Vijayaratham (2005) identified the features of PGA that develop students' higher order thinking skills as follows:

1. It develops students' cognitive skills
2. It facilitates experiential learning
3. It promotes active learning
4. It promotes a deep approach to learning
5. It enhances learner- centeredness

Some authors investigated the effect of implementing PGA to teaching writing. Litinin (2012) investigated the effect of the Process-Genre based approach (PGBA) on the written English performance of computer science students in the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Nigeria. Results indicated that there is a significant effect of PGBA on the performance in written English of computer science students involved in the treatment. Elson (2011) assured that teaching and learning of argumentative writing through PGA had positive impacts on student writing. Students were carefully guided through the processes of writing the argumentative genre, with the focus being on teaching the genre and the structural conventions of writing arguments. The findings revealed that explicit teaching of genres and structural elements of writing is vital for ensuring learners' development. Learners require modeling of the genre scaffolding and careful guidance through step-by-step processes in order to build confidence and express their ideas effectively in written text.

The findings of Plata and Cads' study (2010) showed that the eclectic approach to the teaching and learning of writing skills is more beneficial than traditional approaches. One important feature of PGA is genre analysis, which includes rhetorical analysis,

structural analysis, and functional analysis. Graff (2010) enhanced rhetorical analysis; that is examining not only what authors communicate but also for what purposes they communicate those messages, what effects they attempt to evoke in readers, and how they accomplish those purposes and effects. Rhetorical analysis often involves the study of rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos), the purposes and aims of symbolic communication, and the structure of arguments.

Jarunthawatchai (2010) investigated the effects of implementing PGA in teaching L2 writing to Thai students at the university level in terms of the quality of written texts, the students' acquisition of genre knowledge, and the incorporation of genre awareness in the process of EFL writing. The findings from the portfolios and written texts of the experimental group students revealed that the students taught by PGA viewed genres from a complex and wider perspective. In explaining their awareness of the genres, they considered genres from multiple dimensions. That is, they recognized social situation, communicative purposes, writer-readers and their relationship, content and its organization, as well as various differences in language use. They were also aware that such textual characteristics and contextual features

of genre are interrelated and inseparable. According to the analysis of the students' think-aloud protocols, it was found that the students in the experimental group incorporated their awareness of genre in their process of composition. The students' think-aloud protocols revealed that the incorporation of content, organization, and language use was visible in different stages of their process of writing.

DingMing (2009) designed an empirical study to explore the feasibility of PGA in the teaching of English business letter writing. The results are as follows: 1-PGA is more effective than product approach in helping students arrange the content, use the language, and organize the whole composition appropriately in their business letter writing. 2-Students changed their attitude toward business letter writing positively after about one-term systematic practice under PGA writing instruction. 3-Students take the PGA teaching guidance as a useful way under which they can improve their business letter writing ability, and they are willing to learn writing under this kind of teaching instruction in the coming semesters.

As effective teaching is based on communication, the goal of English language teaching is exactly the same, namely to develop the ability of students to

communicate with people in a new language in real world situations. Urging students to use their target language (English language) for the purpose of genuine communication necessitates taking into consideration their interests, their different learning styles, and their views when planning for teaching them. It also means that teachers manage their teaching in the way that makes students feel included, value the educational process, and take control of their own learning. These requirements of teaching are manifested in student-centered learning as one of the innovative paradigms of teaching.

Taking into account that teaching today is shifting from teacher-centered to learner-centered (Kim, 2009), it is quite evident that new strategies to increase students' writing shall be implemented. Accordingly, because Internet-based courses focus more on students and engaging them with information in different periods of time, new strategies and techniques are required to facilitate meaningful learning for students. In addition, Tsou, Wang, and Lin (2002) asserted that research findings supported integrating web-mediated tools in EFL writing instruction as they have positive influences on students' motivation.

Reviewing literature on writing instruction promotes and emphasizes

integrating information and communication technologies into writing environment either as content or as a supplementary medium in an attempt to enhance interactions among students and the teacher over the conventional writing environment; thereby students can be highly motivated and engaged to write in a foreign language. In this regard, Yang and Chung (2005) stated that a web-based writing environment can improve students' writing skills over the conventional writing environment. For example, students can easily review and learn from each other's work. The anonymity of the Internet may help motivate students to review their peers work. Additionally, various Internet features, such as interactive discussions, enable students to interact with each other and with the teacher. Teachers can constructively criticize students' work.

Design of the study

The two-group post-assessment design was utilized in the experiment. The participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group.

Participants of the study

The participants of the present research consisted of third year EFL majors enrolled in Sohag Faculty of Education during the academic year 2017/2018. They were (N=23)

for the experimental group and (N=23) for the control group.

Delimitations of the Study

The present study has been restricted to the following delimits:

1. The subjects of the present study are the third-year English majors at Sohag Faculty of Education where the researchers work. This stage of EFL majors was chosen because of the following considerations:
 - a. This stage of third-year EFL majors at Sohag Faculty of Education was chosen because it represents the transitional stage between the EFL freshmen and EFL graduates who should have thorough knowledge in writing different genres of writing.
 - b. Those are the future EFL teachers whose well-preparedness is a long-run investment in the future of their EFL students. Unless they have a thorough command of EFL writing skills, they are not likely to transfer the basics of writing process either in literary or non-literary genres to their students.
 - c. Through teaching them, the researchers found out that they have poor writing skills especially in functional writing genres that are required in their future workplace

either in content skills or organization skills.

2. Depending on the results of Needs Assessment of Student Writing (NASW) (see Appendix B), three written genres are required in the present study, as follows:
 - a. The narrative genre (first person);
 - b. The functional genre; and
 - c. The expository genre.
3. The study is delimited to developing the following EFL writing skills:
 - a. Content skills (unity, coherence, and cohesion);
 - b. Organizational skills (writing an introduction, following appropriate sequence of the methods of development, and writing conclusion);
 - c. Stylistic skills;
 - d. Revising skills; and
 - e. Mechanical skills.

Instruments and materials of the study

To achieve the objective of study, the researchers constructed the following instruments and materials:

1. A checklist of EFL writing skills and sub-skills.
2. An EFL writing test with a scoring rubric.
3. A suggested web-mediated process-genre based program test.

Findings and Discussion

The current study aims to investigate the effects of a suggested web-mediated process genre-based (PG) program for developing writing skills and autonomy of third-year EFL majors at Sohag Faculty of Education. Results of implementing the program were tallied and tabulated. The statistical package SPSS (version 23.0.) was utilized in the statistical treatment of the findings of the study. t-test formula for independent samples was employed in testing the hypotheses

Findings of the Study

t-test formula for independent samples was employed in testing the hypothesis of the study as follows:

1. Question One:

The first question of the study was stated as follows:

“What is the effect of the suggested web-mediated PG-based program on developing the writing skills of third-year EFL majors?”

To answer this question, it was hypothesized that:

"there is a statistically significant difference between mean scores of the experimental group students and the control group ones in the post-testing of their EFL writing skills in favor of the experimental group." To test this hypothesis, students’ scores on the test of writing skills were calculated and tabulated (see Appendix G). T-test formula for independent samples was employed to decide on the significance of the difference between mean scores of the experimental group and the control group students. Table (5) sets out the results of the post-testing of the third-year EFL majors' writing skills.

Table (6) T-test Analysis of Students’ Scores in the Post-Testing of the Overall EFL writing Skills

Groups	N	Mean	SD	DF	T. value	Sig (2-tailed)
Experimental	23	27.43	3.72	44	7.69	0.01 **
Control	23	20.31	2.44	44		

****P≤ .01**

It is apparent from the table (6) that a difference between the scores of the two groups in the post-testing of their EFL writing skills does exist favoring the experimental group students. The difference is statistically significant as the observed t-

value is greater than the tabular t-value($P \leq .01$). Thus, the hypothesis one was accepted. As the experimental group students share the control group ones all variables except the treatment variable, their high scores in the post-testing could be attributed to the effect of the suggested WMPGP-based program.

Hence, the WMPGP for writing instruction resulted in better achievement in EFL writing skills compared to the underlying traditional approach in teaching writing.

To determine how largely the suggested program affected students' EFL writing skills, the effect size was calculated with Cohen's d formula (Jackson,2011, p.292) using the mean difference divided by standard deviation previously obtained from the Independent-Samples T-test outputs as shown in Table (7) below:

Table (7) Effect size of the EFL writing skills test

EFL Writing Skills	T. value	df	2η	D	Magnitude
	7.69	44	0.57	2.29	large

As noted in Table (7) above, the value of (2.29) was greater than (0.8). Hence, the

effect size is large, which obviously demonstrates that the intervention greatly helped increase the students' overall writing skills in the demanded genres that were tackled in the current study.

An In-Depth Analysis of the Results of the Post-testing of Students' Performance in EFL writing skills

To get a more detailed idea about the effect of the suggested program on each EFL writing skill considered in the current study (content, organization, style, revision, mechanics), an in-depth analysis of students' scores on the pre-post writing test. This analysis included calculating mean scores and t-values for each of these writing skills as shown in Table (8) below:

Table (8) T-Test Results of Students' Scores on each EFL Writing Skill

Writing Skills	Group	N	Mean	SD	T. value	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Content	Control	23	7.13	1.63	5.32	44	0.01
	Experimental	23	9.91	1.90			
Organization	Control	23	7.56	1.56	4.11	44	0.01
	Experimental	23	9.48	1.59			
Style	Control	23	1.56	0.65	2.07	44	0.04
	Experimental	23	2.04	0.64			
Revising	Control	23	2.48	0.790	3.72	44	0.01
	Experimental	23	3.74	1.42			
Mechanics	Control	23	1.47	0.59	5.05	44	0.01
	Experimental	23	2.26	0.45			

**P ≤ .01

Data was represented in Table (8) above revealed that there was a statistically high significant difference at (0.01) level between

mean scores of the experimental group students and the control group students on each writing skill considered in the EFL

writing test favoring the experimental group students.

2. Question Two

The theoretical framework of the study tackled the major features of the suggested of WMPG-based program.

Discussion of the study

The statistically significant differences in the writing performance of the two groups (control and experimental) can be attributed to a number of features, as both of the web-mediated writing instruction and the process genre approach availed in a way that was very unlikely to exist in traditional writing classes and activities therein. One of these features can be represented in promoting the PGA practices as a successfully proved paradigm for teaching writing. Each of the process approach and the genre approach has its advantages to develop different aspects of writing skills.

The positive rewards of implementing PGA in teaching writing that have been assured in the current study concur with the findings of previous research asserting that PGA is strongly correlated with higher performance in EFL writing with most of its skills; such as Litinin (2012), Elson (2011); Hanjani& Li,2014;and Ajmal (2015)

Drawn together, it seems that going through the stages of PGA aligned with the facilities of web-based instruction impacted positively their writing performance in terms of content, organization, style, revision, and mechanics. The use of the process-genre approach to writing allows teachers to help students recognize the steps they go through to create a written text which should lead to less stressful and motivated writing. The fact that learners are encouraged to discuss, asses, and analyze their own writing made them feel more confident and less threatened. These conclusions were verified quantitatively in the current study with proper statistical analysis that revealed that the experimental group students who were taught the EFL writing skills by the suggested WMPGP based-program outperformed their control peers.

Conclusion

Based on the results of statistical analysis of data quantitatively, it can be concluded that the participants of study's EFL writing skills were developed as a result of participating in the suggested WMPGP. Accordingly, the WMPGP can be estimated as being effective in achieving the goals of the present study.

Recommendations

The findings of the current study brought some practical recommendations to light.

These recommendations are assumed to help EFL teachers, syllabus designers, EFL student writers to solve the problems that hinder effective EFL teaching and learning.

1. Making EFL teachers be aware of the positive impacts of web-based learning. The web-based learning program suggested in the current study provides effective learning environment and achieves collaboration between teachers and students in new ways.
2. Reminding the students for the further purpose of academic writing which exceeds the university community such as publishing and communicating inside college or beyond it.
3. Reminding the writing students with benefits of prewriting activities before drafting the essay and the benefits of revising activities before editing the final drafts.
4. Making syllabus designers pay attention to provide additional websites related to the EFL syllabus topics and should encourage the
5. students to search the internet for more information.
6. Applying process-genre oriented approach to essay writing instruction in other Egyptian Universities, and this can

be only through certain educational reforms in EFL writing program.

7. Reconsidering writing skills in the courses of EFL classes can promote writing proficiency if it is integrated in the core courses starting from their first year at university.

Suggestions for Further Research

During the course of this research, several interesting ideas emerged. These ideas were beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the researcher believes that these can be areas for future research as follows:

1. An investigation of the effectiveness of using web-based learning programs with ESP learners.
2. An investigation of the effect of using web-based learning on developing critical and creative thinking.

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