# The Effect of Genre-Based Instruction: Improving English Writing Ability in the Classroom

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Writing is not an easy task for EFL students, especially for Korean secondary school students, who have rarely been instructed in writing in English. A specific genre has its own communicative purpose and some unique linguistic features. Genre-based writing could help EFL novice writers in writing effectively. The purpose of this study is to show a writing instruction case for Korean novice writers, which is based on a genre-based approach. Before the treatment, 30 Korean high school students wrote college application letters. During the writing class, they read several application letter exemplars and analyzed the features of the genre with their teacher. They studied the organization and linguistic features of the genre in terms of move and step, which is a kind of genre analysis tool. After the instruction, they wrote another application letters for university entrance. Pre-treatment writing and post-treatment writing were compared by move and step as well as fluency. The results showed that novice EFL writers could write longer and more organized compositions with richer contents after they were trained with the genre-based approach, despite lower improvements in terms of accuracy.

## I.  INTRODUCTION

Until recently, the primary concerns at Korean high schools regarding teaching English have been about reading and reading instruction. However, there has been a growing need to emphasize the development of both reading and writing, because an increasing number of secondary school students are being confronted with English writing situations in their academic and professional lives. This demand for writing instruction has seen a wave of new theories into methods of instruction, with researchers coming to recognize that finding the characteristics of students' writing is an important step in writing instruction.

Yet, research on early L2 writing has not become a major focus in the field of second language writing. Despite the fact that ESL (English as a second language) composition has

been studied extensively, work in foreign language (FL) writing can be said to be in its beginning stages. As a result, there are few studies that have actually investigated the development of writing in foreign language instruction. Harklau (2002) also pointed out the neglect of writing issues in L2 and foreign language research, and how researchers should pay strong attention to writing in classroom-based studies of second language acquisition, especially at the elementary and secondary school level. As she noted in her writing research, this study also found the need for further research in secondary education writing classes.

In the early days of L1 writing instruction research, the product of writing was the main concern. In the product-oriented approach, only the final product of a composition was considered important to teachers and researchers. It was an old tradition in writing instruction to think and write linearly. The shortcomings of the tradition of placing importance on only the final product led to a new approach in L1 research. Scholars began to place a greater weight on the process of writing in writing research, not only the final draft, but also the process of writing became the concern of writing research. This shift in emphasis onto drafts was thought to improve the quality of the compositions. Zamel (1987) advocated that process approach should be also adapted to L2 writing instruction. In this approach, pre-writing tasks, such as self-exploration, are an important feature. However, most EFL low proficient students may not be familiar with thinking individually and organizing their ideas. Another aspect of this approach is revision. After receiving comments from a writing teacher and peer students, the student writers are given an opportunity to make the suggested corrections. Much of the experimental research, however, doubted whether or not the student writers really made the corrections, or even if they received comments from teachers and peers in the first place (Cohen, 1987; Ferris, 1995). Other results have shown that students just refer to the grammatical errors the teacher indicates rather than comments on organization and content. They did not revise macro-structures. In other words, the students exhibited a tendency not to organize their composition again. Therefore, the positive effect of individual exploration and peer review has been doubted among researchers.

Moreover, the linear writing tradition of L1 makes it ineffective to adapt to process approach in L2 writing situation without more consideration. Among L2 situations, ESL context and EFL context are somewhat different. In an EFL situation, students rarely have the opportunity to listen and speak in the target language, although ESL students can speak English to a certain extent. It means that these novice writers need more help and another way of writing instruction. However, the 'help' should not be interference. Teachers are supposed to be non-directive and facilitating, assisting students with minimal interference (Emig, 1983).

The skepticism surrounding the process-based writing approach led instructors to turn to genre-based writing. Swales (1990) states, "A genre comprises communicative events, the

members of which share communicative purposes" (p. 58). A discourse community shares the purposes and the members of the community choose a similar structure, style, content and intended audience. Individual and non-systemic writing process, which is a main feature of process approach, makes students feel the difficulty of writing and produce a less meaningful composition without reader awareness. Therefore, they need to be taught an explicit language use for their successful writing through genre-based approach.

As Hyland (2003a) argued, teachers should find ways of scaffolding students' learning knowledge of target genres and ways language makes meanings in context. Genre-based instruction emphasizes the ability to develop writing skills through analyzing 'expert' texts. Understanding the purpose of a certain genre and the knowledge of the expected readers are traits that should assist students in their writing. Johns (1995) reported that using genre-based approach, students' writing a letter to the university president was very successful for tertiary levels. In her class, students analyzed genre forms and constructed a variety of texts. Henry and Roseberry (1998) have found genre analysis helpful for teaching first-year EAP management students to write tourist information texts. Hyon (2001) also reported that students remembered genre features and thought they applied the features to their reading and writing after genre-based reading instruction.

The research on genre-based approach in Korean has been rarely conducted (Sun Lee, 2001). Some experiments and research on process-based pedagogy have reported that the process approach was very helpful in terms of the writing quality (Byung-Bin Im, 2002; Jeong-Won Lee & Young-Joo Hong, 2001; Hye-Sook Park, 2001). In their experiments, however, most participants were university students, and genre-based instruction was rarely considered. The reason why they chose university students as their participants could have to do with the threshold level of language proficiency, and writing text level composition is considered to be proper for university students. Many researchers seemed to think that just sentence level writing, or controlled and guided method should be implemented for students below the tertiary level. Finally, Korean secondary students could be said to be neglected in the text composition field.

Regardless of the opinion of EFL teachers, the reality is that Korean students have to confront standardized writing tests like the TOEFL essay in the global era. They need to write discourse level compositions, arranging paragraphs, choosing the appropriate words, and considering the intended audience for their work. Oryang Kwon, Yoshida, Watanabe, Negishi, and Naganuma (2004) report that Korean high school students displayed poorer writing results than Chinese and Japanese high school students despite higher scores on reading and listening tests. This result may show that Japan and China, which are also EFL situation countries, already prepare language learners for writing discourse level text. The results of the research should motivate researchers and teachers to find more effective methods of writing instruction for the students in preparation for the various English

writing situations they will. The research questions for the study are as follows:

1. Do Korean secondary students, who have had little experience of writing English, improve their English writing ability after genre-based instruction?
2. What are the differences in the written product of high proficient students and low proficient students after genre-based instruction?

## II.  THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

### 1. Definition of Genre

It is often customary to distinguish three different approaches when it comes to genres: the ESP approach, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and the New Rhetoric approach (Hyland, 2003a). The ESP school defines the term genres as a class of communicative events such as a seminar presentation, a university lecture or an academic essay (Paltridge, 2001). They also add that the events are linked by shared purposes recognized by the members of a particular community and that the purposes are the rationale of the genre. The characteristics of the genre help to shape the ways it is structured and the choices of content and style it makes available (Hyland, 2002). The ESP school is based largely on John Swales's work on the discourse structure and linguistic features of scientific reports.

In Systemic genre work, a genre is more often referred to as a kind of text with relating form, function and context, such as a description, procedure, or exposition (Paltridge, 2001). In this approach, a genre is defined as a staged, goal oriented social process, which involves the interactions of participants using language in a conventional, step-wise structure (Hyland, 2002). In Australia, based on Halliday's work and ESP influence, genre studies have been adapted to the ESP teaching and the teaching of academic writing to ESL graduate students (Paltridge, 2001). In New Rhetoric work, genres are often explained as events or social actions that help students interpret and create particular texts (Paltridge, 2001). New Rhetoricians give less emphasis to the form of discourse and more to the action it is used to accomplish, seeking to establish the connections between genre and repeated situations and to identify the way in which genres are seen as recurrent rhetorical actions (Hyland, 2002).

In this research, the genre concept of the Systemic view and the ESP perspectives will be used together as the genre concept. The ESP's concept is rather narrow to adapt to high school students since its main subjects are mostly above tertiary level students. The ESP perspectives are also mainly restricted to writing academic research papers. However, one of the merits of this perspective is that it is very theoretically developed while the Systemic

view is considered by some as functional.

## 2. Genre-Based Pedagogy

Genre pedagogy is based on the belief that learning is best accomplished through explicit awareness of language rather than through experiment and exploration, which are the features of process approach (Hyland, 2002). It emphasizes developing writing skills through analyzing 'expert' texts. Understanding the purpose of a certain genre and the knowledge of the expected readers are critical pieces of information needed for effective writing. Explicit lessons of the particular moves and steps of a genre helps writers write properly in the genre one chooses to write about.

Although process approach is a good method to teach composition for better compositions, it seems ineffective in helping beginning writers create English compositions in an EFL classroom situation. Being aware of the potential readers and the purpose of the writing will help students write with greater focus and coherence. Theses traits alone will drastically improve a subject's writing, especially in terms of the organization and content found in the writing.

Hyland (2002) referred to the procedure of genre pedagogy application as one in which teachers investigate texts and contexts of target situations, suggest model texts of the target genre to students, and explain explicitly what the discourse should be like. Then students build up their writing with the benefit of model texts and explicit instructions. After this, students compose original works, not a reproduction of the reference texts.

However, few studies have evaluated the effects of genre-based pedagogy on student's language and literacy development. Henry and Roseberry (1998) stated that the arguments for and against the genre approach have been limited to the theoretical ones and that few attempts have been made to evaluate the approach empirically. As a result, many researchers and teachers might not be aware of the real results of teaching genre in EFL classrooms.

Hyon (2001) investigated extended effects of an EAP genre-based reading course. She asked the students who had studied genre features in the course a year ago, what they remembered about genres taught in the course; and their percepts on how the instruction had influenced their L2 reading. The results were that a number of students remembered genre features and thought they applied the features to their reading and writing. Johns (1995) stated that in genre-based instruction, teachers might collaborate with students to accomplish the following things: establish the name of genre category; hypothesize about the context and community; hypothesize about roles and purposes of readers and writers; hypothesize about text typification and variation; hypothesize about similarities among genre categories. She suggested the benefits of teaching reading and writing in university

composition for less able students.

Henry and Roseberry (1998) have found genre analysis to be helpful in teaching. The study compared students who studied move analysis tasks with students who studied in the grammatical writing class. They found that the genre approach group improved significantly. They concluded that teaching rhetorical organization in ESP could be successful with advanced students. However, in terms of move accuracy, there was no significant result, comparing with the traditional writing group.

Sengupta, Forey, and Hamp-Lyons (1999) investigated the adaptation of genre-based curriculum at the tertiary level in Hong Kong. They said that this genre-based theory enabled them to look at language as a tool for personal and professional advancement and to constitute the social nature of purposes, audience and the products within the academic genre. Mustafa (1995) also stated that conscious knowledge of genre structure plays an important role in effective use of English in academic settings. He examined the effect of raising university students' awareness of term paper conventions through formal instruction in L2.

About the limitation of genre approach, Hyon (2002) pointed out that this genre-based course might have been limited in vocabulary and comprehension building. Also, as many process approach supporters have pointed out about the genre approach, there are some prescriptive and rather demotivating factors. When considering the danger of genre-based instruction, it should be kept in mind that genre-based instruction might not be considered equally useful for all texts and for all students. As Johns (2003) argued, it is important that students should not have a fixed genre theory, but rather should be willing to revise their text freely. Too much focus on explicit language use in genre-based instruction can be made overgeneralized application in other texts.

Despite this criticism, it is noted that some teachers believe a genre approach helps students to discover how other writers organize texts and acknowledge that certain move models for the research article were helpful in letting students be aware of 'purposes' with beginning ESL writers.

## 3. Genre Analysis and Application Letter Genre

Genre analysis calls for exploring texts for what they tell us about the purposes and functions of language use and the constraints operating on writers in particular contexts. Bhatia (1993) noted that genre analysis as an insightful and thick description of academic and professional texts has become a powerful and useful tool to examine significant form-function relationships. Suggesting CARS model, which means 'create a research space', Swales (1990) maintained the effectiveness of moves and steps in his RA introduction research and also referred to the cyclicity of the moves and steps by showing

examples.

The concept of 'move' can be said to be a semantic unit relevant to the writer's purpose, or a text segment made up of a bundle of linguistic features (Nwogu, 1997). Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) stated that a move is a unit that relates both to the writer's purpose and to the content that one wishes to communicate and that a step is a lower level text unit than the move providing options for the writer in setting out the moves in a particular genre. Yang and Allison (2003) indicated that the effectiveness of the moves and steps as tools for analyzing composition is to distinguish the communicative purposes from the rhetorical techniques and to capture the structure of the composition precisely, more specifically, and more elaborately. In Korea, Sun Lee (2001) examined the introduction of Korean research papers based on Swales' move analysis and showed the possibility that genre-based writing instruction could be effective in Korea. The research paper considered moves and steps as a tool of text analysis, examining moves and steps as a new criterion of writing assessment.

On the genre of application letters, Bhatia (1993) suggested seven moves of a letter of application, but his main concern was that the structure of a letter of application is similar to the structure of a sales promotion letter. Henry and Roseberry (2001) criticized Bhatia's move distinction and analyzed a corpus of native speaker letters, making a new framework based on the corpus data. Upton and Connor (2001) also analyzed the moves of application letters. Their moves feature was more elaborate and they adopted steps that are more optional. Table 1 illustrates the three move-step structures of application letters.

**TABLE 1**
**Moves of Application Genre in the Previous Studies**

| Bhatia(1993) | Henry and Roseberry (2001) | Upton and Connor (2001) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Introducing candidature | 1. Identify the source of information | 1. Opening |
| 2. Establishing credentials | 2. Apply for the position | 2. Referring to a Job |
| 3. Essential detailing of candidate | 3. Provide argument, including supporting information, for the job application | 3. Advertisement |
| 4. Indicating value of candidate |   a. Implicit argument based on neutral evidence or information about background and experience | 4. Offering Candidature |
| 5. Offering incentives |   b. Argument based on what would be good for the applicant | 5. Stating reasons for Applying |
| 6. Enclosing documents | 4. Indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact, or specify means of future | 6. Stating Availability |
| 7. Using pressure tactics | 5. Express politeness or appreciation at the end of the letter | 7. Promoting the Candidate (strategies comparison) |
| 8. Soliciting response | 6. Offer to provide more information | 8. Stipulating Terms and conditions of Employment |
| 9. Ending politely | 7. Reference attached resume | 9. Naming Referees |
| | | 10. Enclosing Documents |
| | | 11. Polite ending |
| | | 12. Signing Off |

Based on the three ways of move analyses for application letter genre presented above, the move analysis of this study is modified for the need of high school students who prepare for college admission. Although they are all application letters for jobs, not for college entrance, as 'selling oneself' to a company or a university can be a similar feature, it does not seem much problematic to refer to the previous job application genre study.

## III.   RESEARCH METHOD

### 1. Participants

The data for this study were collected from about 30 Korean high school students. They were in their second year of a girls' high school. They had little experience of writing in English at high school. They might be considered novice writers in English even though they had read and listened to English for at least 5 years. They were taught text level composition for this research by the researcher.

### 2. Material

Application letters for university admission was used as an instruction genre for this research. The genre was investigated and examined with move analysis. Due to the important and urgent nature of college application letters, the research is likely to command high school students' complete attention, which is a major reason the researcher came to choose this particular genre. Although there have been some application letter research conducted in the area of ESP, almost all of them dealt with business application letters (Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 2001). Swales (1996) also stated the letter of application as one of the genres largely ignored by genre analysis researchers. Although academic application letters are different from job application letters and sales promotion letters, the feature of 'selling something' could be common to the two letter types, which means selling oneself to the target university in the academic application letters. This study referred to their previous frameworks, develop and transform their moves and steps, and then apply the tools to the learners' academic application letters.

On the concept of the target genre and the needed moves, a handout was presented for the students to generate ideas clearly and explicitly. For modeling good examples of college application letters, ten sample letters were selected. Five out of ten application letters were excerpted from a commercial book, 'Winning personal statements' (Hur, 1999), that published a number of successful Korean students' application letters to American universities, and the other five samples were taken from an internet site

(http://www.epistemelinks.com), which were application letters of native speakers. The writing samples were chosen to show the participants various examples of successful writing from both Korean and native speakers. A few of the exemplars dealt with the majors of computer science, chemistry, textile, economics, and accounting, which would be the future majors of the participating students.

## 3. Procedure

1) Before Treatment

Before the treatment, for their activation of writing content, they first wrote application letters for university entrance in the Korean language, and then the 30 students wrote English application letters for university entrance without instruction on the characteristics of the genre. They were not allowed to use a dictionary. However, considering that this was their first time writing such a long composition, the teacher answered questions about certain words or phrases such as, *the oldest daughter, praise, rational, diligent, merit and demerit, interpersonal relation ship, self development, I made friends with~,* etc. Since they were afraid of English composition, the teacher encouraged them not to be afraid of making mistakes, and even allowed the students to use Korean vocabulary if they didn't know the relevant English words.

To divide high proficient students and low proficient students among the 30 students, the composition introducing them to the university and asking for admission was used as their pre-treatment writing. Two English teachers who have had rater training scored them by the criteria of organization, content, grammar and vocabulary use. A condition of good writing can be said to include well organized, coherent content, and appropriate rhetorical expression. Thus, if the division of the introduction, body, and conclusion were definite, and the content were coherent, the students got high score. Moreover, as they used more grammatical sentences and more appropriate vocabulary for their composition, they got higher score. The result of the test showed that most students in the class got low scores. The range of their scores was from 30 points to 65 points. Their poor performance can be attributed to the fact that they have not been instructed on the concept of organization. Most of the subjects could only produce one paragraph for their compositions, regardless of the quality of content. Although there was little variance between the scores, five students over the mean score of 60 points were placed into a higher-level group, while five students with mean scores of below 40 points were placed into a lower level group for this study. The correlation index of the two raters as a check of the inter-rater reliability was .921. The mean scores of two raters were used.

2) Treatment

As there was little experimental genre-based writing research in other EFL countries as well as in Korea, it was difficult to know how the genre-based writing method could be applied to EFL writing classroom at the high school level. Referring to Tribble's book (1996, pp. 145-151) and the teacher's guide book (Macken, 1989) of Austrailia, which is well known for its genre-based writing, the first stage involved explaining the purpose, the reader, and the definitions of the moves to the students with handouts. The second stage involved the learners reading and analyzing the ten sample letters with the researcher during class hours to know the organization and common move patterns. Students were also taught about the genre-specific features of vocabulary, and grammar, as well as the moves and steps. In this genre of application letters, they learned the use of present tense and past tense; the use of *I* and *you*; active voice; the use of *and*, the use of *have abilities* to express their experience and achievements; the use of noun phrase and adjective etc, from the teacher and researcher in the classroom. The third stage was joint construction stage, in which the teacher and the students wrote an application letter on the blackboard together. Students gave ideas to the teacher and the teacher wrote sentences from introduction to conclusion. These treatments were performed in their English classes three times a week for a month.

3) Writing After the Treatment

After the treatment, 30 students wrote another set of college application letters individually, and this was also performed in the classroom for 50 minutes. During the experiment, there was a rather unexpected event. A few of the students hesitated to write, stating that they were more afraid of writing after being instructed what writing entailed. This might imply that writing, even with an extra instruction; can still a burden to the beginning writers.

## 4. Data Analysis

1) Holistic Score

As a traditional way and the way that this study divided students into higher and lower level group in the pre-treatment writing, the holistic scoring considering organization, content, grammar, and vocabulary was used. It was also used for comparing the pre-treatment and the post-treatment results in order to see the improvement. To verify the inter-reliability, the researcher and another colleague teacher scored students' application

letters.

## 2) Moves and Steps of College Application Letter

Our analysis of the genre moves and definitions was refined, based on analyzing the sample application letters and a discussion with a colleague teacher and students. During the process of establishing the reliability to the move analysis, the necessary moves and steps for application letters were discussed and negotiated with a colleague teacher. If there is some discrepancy on the application letter moves, the negotiation of evaluation was adopted, referring to several previous studies (Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 2001; Upton & Conner, 2001). The moves of this study were determined as seen in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**
**Moves of College Application Letter**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Opening impressively | 4. Describing oneself |
| 2. Stating goals or stating something about the department | a. Family |
| | b. Character |
| 3. Stating experience | c. Interest |
| a. Reward, achievement | d. Hobby |
| b. Activity or project | 5. Suggesting incentives |
| c. Social service | 6. Expressing one's value |
| d. Overcoming difficulties or motives | 7. Ending |
| | a. Polite ending |
| | b. Closing impressively |

The students' compositions were analyzed to investigate the improvement of their writing in terms of moves and steps. The number of moves and steps used in the pre-treatment writing, and in the post-treatment writing was compared to see whether the participants enhanced their writing ability by being aware of the moves and steps, and moreover, through awareness of the purpose and their audience. The number of moves and steps might be said to be a criterion of improvement in their writing skills.

## 3) Comparison Criteria between Exemplars and Participants' Writing

To see the quality of the students' writing, a framework was designed. If exemplars could be considered as examples of good writing, the features of the exemplars could be criteria to see the improvement of the target genre writing. In the aspects of the general writing features like the total number of t-unit and error free t-unit, the genre-specific vocabulary, the genre-specific syntactic features, and the genre-specific rhetorical structural features, the participants' pre-treatment and post-treatment writing was compared with the exemplars.

To analyze the detailed results, the writers of the exemplars are classified by their majors. They are Korean students admitted to American universities and native speakers who entered the universities in their country. The participants' compositions as beginners were compared to the exemplars in many aspects.

**TABLE 3**
**Majors of Exemplars and Participants**

| Exemplars | Major | Participants | Future Major |
|---|---|---|---|
| E1 (KU) | Accounting | S1 (L) | Oriental medicine |
| E2 (KU) | Textile | S4 (L) | Architecture |
| E3 (KU) | Electrical engineering | S9 (L) | Architecture |
| E4 (KU) | Economics | S11 (L) | Oriental medicine |
| E5 (KG) | Education | S20 (L) | Earth science |
| E6 (KG) | Computer science | S10 (H) | Oriental medicine |
| E7 (KG) | Statistics | S21 (H) | Education |
| E8 (AG) | International relations | S26 (H) | Pharmacy |
| E9 (AG) | Music | S29 (H) | Medicine |
| E10 (AG) | Athletes | S30 (H) | Pharmacy |

*Note*: High= over a score of 60 out of 100 at the pre experimental writing
       Low= below a score of 40 out of 100 at the pre experimental writing

Table 3 showed the classification of their majors. K means Korean students; A means American students; U means university; G means graduate school. S1, S4, S9, S11, and S20 are lower level participants in their research whereas S10, S21, S26, S29, and S30 are higher-level participants. S means student and the number is their own number in the classroom. They are the students who got higher or lower scores in the pre-treatment writing than the other participants.

## IV.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Overall Result

All the 30 students' post-treatment writing displayed a vast improvement over their pre-treatment compositions. Not only did the subjects write more sentences, they were also able to grasp the concept of paragraphing. One of the prominent features of the pre-treatment writing was that the students wrote just one unorganized paragraph. However, after the instruction, 27 students were able to divide their writing into paragraphs by their own criteria for organization. Students judged the move categories during the class hour.

Having students participate in analyzing and scoring their text was significant, as they could review their composition by the moves. It proved to be one of the better qualities of genre-based writing assessment than the traditional scoring system. It was a natural form of self-assessment and peer assessment, since if they had some questions of judging moves; they could ask one another, which is a kind of peer assessment. There were instances when the subjects asked their teacher for clarification on which sentences belong to which moves. The teacher was then able to judge the move with the students, exhibiting negotiation in the writing class. As they wrote their texts themselves, they were the best authority on judging the intention of the writer.

Most moves were included in the post-treatment compositions compared with those in the pre-treatment compositions as depicted in Table 4. As the frequency shows, most students used various necessary moves in their post-treatment writing.

The evidence clearly shows that they used more moves in the post-treatment writing than in the pre-treatment writing. Every student used move 4, which seeks to relate oneself to the reader, such as the director of admission. As noted in Table 4, 100% of the students used move 4 in their post-treatment writing, while 86.7% of them had used the move in the pre-treatment writing. As such, students seemed to think that describing oneself to the reader in this genre was important for admission. Generally, the move 4 of describing oneself might be an obligatory move in their application letters of personal statements.

**TABLE 4**
**Moves and Steps Used by Students in Pre-treatment and Post-treatment Writing**

| Moves (1~7) / Steps (a~d) | Pre-treatment Writing | | Post-treatment Writing | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of Student | Percentage | No. of Student | Percentage |
| 1. Opening impressively | 0 | 0.00 | 12 | 40.00 |
| 2. Uttering goals or stating something about the department | 1 | 3.30 | 11 | 36.70 |
| 3. Stating experiences a. Award, achievement b. Activity or project c. Social service d. Overcoming difficulty | 6 | 20.0 | 27 | 90.00 |
| 4. Describing oneself a. Family b. Character c. Interests and hobbies | 26 | 86.70 | 30 | 100.0 |
| 5. Suggesting incentive | 0 | 0.00 | 26 | 86.70 |
| 6. Expressing one's value | 1 | 3.30 | 11 | 36.70 |
| 7. Ending a. Polite ending b. Closing impressively | 0 | 0.00 | 12 | 40.00 |

*Note*: Percentage is the percentage of the students using the move out of 30 participants.

Additionally, Table 4 showed the number of the move and the steps of stating experiences and suggesting incentives greatly increased in the post-treatment writing than in the pre-treatment writing. For example, 27 students out of 30 used the move in their post-treatment writing, while only six students had used the move previously.

However, move 2 and 6 appeared less frequently in the post-treatment writing comparing with 3, 4, and 5 moves. It can be assumed that the less used moves were not emphasized as much in the instruction. Opening and closing moves also showed less frequency, which suggests more emphasis on those moves are needed (see Table 4).

Table 5 compared the used move and step number between higher-level students and lower level students. The whole number of moves and steps established in this study was 14. The moves and steps may be used optionally, because depending on the individual; some students could emphasize their experience and family story, while other students could state their achievements and impressive ending. Higher-level students produced more organized compositions with rich contents and less grammatical errors. By the number of moves and steps, lower level students exhibited more improvement in their post-treatment writing than higher-level students. They also wrote much longer composition with richer content than the pre-treatment one which was just three or four sentence-text. These results are similar with Johns (1995), although the lower level students had more grammatical and spelling errors and produced shorter works than the higher level students. After the genre-based writing instruction with move use, they seemed to gain more confidence writing in English. Until they reach a certain proficiency level, writing teachers might have to endure grammatical inaccuracy.

**TABLE 5**
**Frequency of Moves and Steps of the Pre-treatment and Post-treatment Writing by the Proficiency Level**

| Higher Level | Pre | Post | Lower Level | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S10 | 4 | 6 | S1 | 2 | 5 |
| S21 | 2 | 8 | S4 | 1 | 2 |
| S26 | 3 | 6 | S9 | 2 | 3 |
| S29 | 3 | 5 | S11 | 3 | 9 |
| S30 | 4 | 5 | S20 | 5 | 7 |
| Sum | 16 | 30 | Sum | 13 | 26 |

Another criterion of measuring improvement after the instruction was the holistic scores of the students. Scores were given by their organization, contents, and mechanics including grammatical points (see Table 6).

**TABLE 6**
**The t-test Result of the Pre-Treatment and Post-treatment Writing**

|                | Mean  | SD     | N  | *t*   | Sig. |
|----------------|-------|--------|----|-------|------|
| Pre-treatment  | 52.97 | 9.419  | 30 | 9.273 | .000 |
| Post-treatment | 68.33 | 11.018 | 30 |       |      |

The correlation matrix of the post-treatment writing score between two raters was .864. The mean score of the pre-treatment composition in the class was 52.97, while that of the post-treatment composition was 68.33. The t-test result is illustrated in Table 6, showing that the effect of the instruction was significant (.000, $p < .01$). They improved their writing skill, especially in terms of contents and organization.

## 2. Comparison of Exemplars and Participant's writing

### 1) General Writing Features

Whereas the exemplars used 43.30 t-units, the participants wrote 11.10 t-units on average in their pre-treatment writing and wrote 23.40 t-units on average in their post-treatment writing as seen in Table 7, 8 and 9. Although the participants wrote the shorter compositions than the exemplars, they apparently seemed to improve their writing with richer content after the instruction comparing with the pre-treatment writing.

**TABLE 7**
**The General Writing Features of the Exemplars**

| Exemplar | Total Number of T-units | Introduction/Body/Conclusion Division |
|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| E1 (KU)  | 51                      | Y                                     |
| E2 (KU)  | 35                      | Y                                     |
| E3 (KU)  | 50                      | Y                                     |
| E4 (KU)  | 40                      | Y                                     |
| E5 (KG)  | 34                      | Y                                     |
| E6 (KG)  | 35                      | Y                                     |
| E7 (KG)  | 47                      | Y                                     |
| E8 (AG)  | 54                      | Y                                     |
| E9 (AG)  | 37                      | Y                                     |
| E10 (AG) | 50                      | Y                                     |
| Average  | 43.30                   |                                       |

*Note*: Y = use of basic writing organization, N = no use of basic writing organization.

Many participants in their latter writing compositions composed an organized introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs. Still, three out of ten students did not show

the organization of introduction, body, and conclusion. It should be noted that introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs are important in English writing as well as in Korean writing, and that the subjects have probably been instructed on their importance in Korean writing classes (See Table 8 and 9).

**TABLE 8**
**The General Writing Features of the Pre-Treatment Writing**

| Participants | Total No. of T-units | No. of Error Free T-units | | Introduction/body/conclusion Division |
| | | Freq | Ratio | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S1 (L) | 8 | 1 | 12.50 | N |
| S4 (L) | 4 | 1 | 25.00 | N |
| S9 (L) | 3 | 1 | 33.33 | N |
| S11 (L) | 8 | 2 | 25.00 | N |
| S20 (L) | 4 | 1 | 25.00 | N |
| S10 (H) | 16 | 13 | 81.25 | N |
| S21 (H) | 16 | 12 | 75.00 | N |
| S26 (H) | 17 | 12 | 70.59 | N |
| S29 (H) | 13 | 9 | 69.23 | N |
| S30 (H) | 22 | 10 | 45.45 | N |
| Average | 11.10 | 6.20 | 46.23 | |

**TABLE 9**
**The General Writing Features of the Post-Treatment Writing**

| Participants | Total No. of T-units | No. of Error Free T-units | | Introduction/body/conclusion Division |
| | | Freq | Ratio | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S1 (L) | 19 | 2 | 10.53 | N |
| S4 (L) | 12 | 1 | 8.33 | Y |
| S9 (L) | 15 | 0 | 0.00 | Y |
| S11 (L) | 19 | 5 | 26.32 | Y |
| S20 (L) | 23 | 6 | 26.08 | Y |
| S10 (H) | 44 | 27 | 61.36 | Y |
| S21 (H) | 17 | 10 | 58.82 | N |
| S26 (H) | 27 | 18 | 66.67 | Y |
| S29 (H) | 37 | 15 | 40.54 | Y |
| S30 (H) | 21 | 9 | 42.86 | N |
| Average | 23.40 | 9.30 | 34.15 | |

As for making errors, they made even more in the post-treatment writing. This may be natural considering that they wrote far more sentences without the benefit of any special grammatical lessons. The importance should be placed on their attempt at text level compositions, although grammar lessons are being performed at sentence level writing or in reading classes. If they have more lessons on linguistic features including grammar for

longer period, accuracy may also be enhanced.

2) Genre-Specific Vocabulary

   In the application letter, Henry and Roseberry (2001) found that the most frequent word is *I* the corpus of 40 examples. The research showed the word *and*, which is used for 'listing the abilities', is also one of the most frequent words, such as *the, of, to, a, in, that, it, was, is, one, with, as, but, they*, etc. But in this research, *I, and, have, you* are analyzed because the words are considered as specific vocabulary for this genre.

   Table 10 indicates the use of the genre-specific vocabulary. Table 11 and 12 show the participants use of those words before the treatment and after the treatment.

   Compared with the results shown in Tables (10, 11, and 12), the total number of the words in the writing is very different. There were 679 words on average in the exemplars; before the instruction, the participants wrote only 91 words on average; but the participants used 210 words in their post-treatment writing.

   Although the frequency of *I* is the highest in the exemplars, the percentage of *I* to the total words is 16% in the pre-treatment writing; 10% in the post; and 6% in the exemplars. It means that the participants used 'I' very frequently in terms of the ratio.

   The frequency of 'and' is 1.70 on average in the pre-treatment writing samples, 5.50 on average in the post one, 13.70 in the exemplars. It shows that the participants did not have enough writing abilities to list their experiences and abilities.

**TABLE 10**
**Frequent Genre-Specific Vocabulary in the Exemplary Writing**

| Exemplar | Total No. of Words | *I* | | *and* | | | | *have* | *you* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq | (%) | Total No. | Freq. Btw clauses | Btw words | Btw Clauses % | Freq | Freq |
| E1 (KU) | 650 | 58 | (8.92) | 9 | 6 | 3 | 66.67 | 12 | 0 |
| E2 (KU) | 1309 | 42 | (3.13) | 15 | 7 | 8 | 46.67 | 13 | 5 |
| E3 (KU) | 764 | 37 | (9.42) | 14 | 6 | 8 | 42.86 | 29 | 3 |
| E4 (KU) | 545 | 21 | (6.79) | 10 | 4 | 6 | 40.00 | 10 | 3 |
| E5 (KG) | 616 | 71 | (3.41) | 22 | 5 | 17 | 22.37 | 14 | 2 |
| E6 (KG) | 483 | 37 | (7.66) | 13 | 4 | 9 | 30.77 | 12 | 6 |
| E7 (KG) | 672 | 71 | (10.75) | 14 | 6 | 8 | 42.86 | 14 | 3 |
| E8 (AG) | 618 | 9 | (1.47) | 19 | 7 | 12 | 36.84 | 8 | 4 |
| E9 (AG) | 670 | 36 | (5.37) | 9 | 7 | 2 | 77.78 | 8 | 0 |
| E10 (AG) | 466 | 26 | (5.58) | 12 | 7 | 5 | 58.33 | 9 | 4 |
| Average | 679.30 | 40.80 | (6.23) | 13.70 | 5.90 | 7.80 | 46.52 | 12.90 | 3.00 |

*Note*: Freq = Frequency, Btw=Between

The participants in the pre-treatment writing tend to use *and* as the first word of the sentence, which means that they use *and* as a sentential connective. However in the exemplars, it is shown that the use of *and* in front of a sentence is very rare. Therefore, the students should be taught that the use of the sentential *and* may be an awkward expression. Though the experts use various connectives, the student writers' use of the connectives tend to be limited to *and, because,* and *but*.

The frequency of the use of *have* appears as one on average in the pre-treatment writing; four in the post, 12 in the exemplars. It should be considered that the use of *have* needs to be greatly emphasized in class. The expression of 'experience', 'be able to', 'learn', and 'skill' also need to be taught for students to use because these kinds of words allow the students to stand out their merits more effectively.

**TABLE 11**
**Frequent Genre-Specific Vocabulary in the Pre-Treatment Writing**

| Pre-Trea tment writing | Total No. of Words | *I* Freq (%) | | *and* Total | Freq. Btw clauses | Btw words | Btw Clauses % | *have* Freq | *you* Freq |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S1(L) | 82 | 15 | (18.29) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 100.00 | 1 | 0 |
| S4(L) | 41 | 5 | (12.20) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 100.00 | 0 | 0 |
| S9(L) | 44 | 8 | (18.18) | 3 | 1 | 2 | 33.33 | 1 | 0 |
| S11(L) | 60 | 12 | (20.20) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0 |
| S20(L) | 30 | 4 | (13.33) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.00 | 0 | 0 |
| S10(H) | 119 | 20 | (16.80) | 3 | 1 | 2 | 33.33 | 4 | 4 |
| S21(H) | 129 | 21 | (16.28) | 2 | 1 | 1 | 50.00 | 0 | 0 |
| S26(H) | 116 | 20 | (17.24) | 2 | 1 | 1 | 50.00 | 4 | 4 |
| S29(H) | 113 | 13 | (11.50) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 100.00 | 5 | 3 |
| S31(H) | 176 | 31 | (17.61) | 3 | 3 | 0 | 100.00 | 1 | 0 |
| Average | 91.00 | 14.90 | (16.14) | 1.70 | 1.00 | 0.70 | 51.85 | 1.60 | 1.10 |

**TABLE 12**
**Frequent Genre-Specific Vocabulary in the Post-Treatment Writing**

| Post-Tre atment writing | Total No. of Words | *I* Freq (%) | | *and* Total No. | Freq. Btw clauses | Btw words | Btw Clauses % | *have* Freq | *you* Freq |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S1(L) | 158 | 8 | (5.26) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 100.00 | 1 | 0 |
| S4(L) | 166 | 7 | (4.22) | 3 | 3 | 0 | 100.00 | 0 | 0 |
| S9(L) | 75 | 10 | (13.33) | 3 | 3 | 0 | 100.00 | 4 | 5 |
| S11(L) | 161 | 25 | (15.52) | 7 | 5 | 2 | 71.43 | 3 | 2 |
| S20(L) | 206 | 26 | (12.62) | 4 | 3 | 1 | 75.00 | 3 | 0 |
| S10(H) | 399 | 37 | (9.27) | 11 | 6 | 5 | 54.55 | 8 | 0 |
| S21(H) | 164 | 18 | (10.98) | 4 | 1 | 3 | 25.00 | 1 | 2 |
| S26(H) | 221 | 29 | (13.12) | 6 | 2 | 4 | 33.33 | 2 | 2 |
| S29(H) | 345 | 39 | (11.30) | 8 | 3 | 5 | 37.50 | 12 | 6 |
| S31(H) | 207 | 20 | (9.66) | 8 | 1 | 7 | 12.50 | 7 | 9 |
| Average | 210.20 | 21.90 | (10.51) | 5.50 | 2.80 | 2.70 | 60.93 | 4.10 | 2.60 |

The reference of the university the applicant is applying to, which can often be mentioned by *you, or your,* appears one time in the pre-treatment writing; twice in the post one; and three times in the exemplars on average. The mentioning of the reader, which in this case is the university or the admission committee, might be helpful for successful application letters.

3) Genre-Specific Syntactic Features

Henry and Roseberry (2001) referred to the frequent use of the genre-specific sentence through the corpus of 40 application letters. They investigated that there are many structures such as *I am NP, I am adjective, I have experience in ~*, and past or present perfect tense in the genre of application letters. Therefore in this research, those features are analyzed in Table 13, 14, and 15.

**TABLE 13**
**Genre-Specific Syntactic Features in the Exemplary Writing**

| Exemplar | *I am +NP* | *I am adjective* | *I have experience in~* | Past or present perfect |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq | Freq | Freq | Freq |
| E1 (KU) | 4 | 8 | 2 | 46 |
| E2 (KU) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 27 |
| E3 (KU) | 3 | 4 | 2 | 55 |
| E4 (KU) | 0 | 7 | 1 | 17 |
| E5 (KG) | 1 | 4 | 0 | 26 |
| E6 (KG) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 31 |
| E7 (KG) | 0 | 4 | 3 | 35 |
| E8 (AG) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| E9 (AG) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 21 |
| E10 (AG) | 0 | 3 | 0 | 42 |
| Average | 1.10 | 3.50 | 1.50 | 30.90 |

As expected, there are various structures of 'showing oneself' in exemplars, such as *I am +NP, I am adjective, I have experience in~, I am able to~,* etc. However, participants could not express their abilities freely because of their language proficiency and insufficient language training in Table 14 and 15.

Generally, the use of *I am NP, I am adjective, I have experience in ~* has increased in the post-treatment writing. However, it might be necessary that the past or present perfect tense should be emphasized in the writing instruction of this genre, as the use of past tense and present perfect aspect on average in the exemplars is 30.90 compared with 4.30 in the

pre-treatment writing and 8.80 in the post- treatment writing.

### TABLE 14
**Genre-Specific Syntactic Features in the Pre-Treatment Writing**

| Participant | I am +NP | I am adjective | I have experience in~ | Past or present perfect |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq | Freq | Freq | Freq |
| S1 (L) | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| S4 (L) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| S9 (L) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| S11 (L) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| S20 (L) | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| S10 (H) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| S21 (H) | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| S26 (H) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| S29 (H) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| S30 (H) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| Average | 0.70 | 1.70 | 0.20 | 4.30 |

### TABLE 15
**Genre-Specific Syntactic Features in the Post-Treatment Writing**

| Participants | I am +NP | I am adjective | I have experience in~ | Past or present perfect |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq | Freq | Freq | Freq |
| S1 (L) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| S4 (L) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| S9 (L) | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| S11 (L) | 4 | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| S20 (L) | 2 | 3 | 0 | 10 |
| S10 (H) | 0 | 5 | 4 | 27 |
| S21 (H) | 0 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| S26 (H) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| S29 (H) | 1 | 6 | 0 | 14 |
| S30 (H) | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Average | 0.90 | 2.60 | 1.00 | 8.80 |

4) Genre-Specific Rhetorical Features

The following three Tables (Table 16, 17, and 18) show how the move order patterns were used; if the writers used the impressive opening and how they change tenses from the

first move to the second move in three comparative writing examples.

The number of the move order pattern means as following: 1. Opening impressively, 4. Describing oneself, family, character, hobbies and interests, 3. Stating experiences, achievements, and awards, participating in projects or activities, 2. Stating Goals or stating something about the department, 5. Suggesting incentives (see page 11).

The student writers came to use various moves in the post-treatment writing. While the pre-treatment writing concentrated mostly on personality, after the instruction, they expressed themselves with sufficient contents and moves. Apparently, the exemplars show various move use beginning from the first move of opening impressively. The post-treatment writing examples of higher-level students also show a move order pattern that is similar to that of the exemplars.

**TABLE 16**
**Genre-Specific Rhetorical Features in the Exemplary Writing**

| Exemplars | Move order pattern | Impressive opening | Tense change (1st move->2nd) |
|---|---|---|---|
| E1 (KU) | 1-4-3-2-5-7 | Y | Present-past |
| E2 (KU) | 1-4-3-2-5 | Y | Present-past |
| E3 (KU) | 1-4-3-2-5-7 | Y | Past-present |
| E4 (KU) | 1-4-3-2-5 | Y | Present-past |
| E5 (KG) | 1-4-3-2-5 | Y | Past |
| E6 (KG) | 1-3-2-5-6 | Y | Present-past |
| E7 (KG) | 1-4-2-3-5-7 | Y | Present-past |
| E8 (AG) | 1-4-3-2 | Y | Present-past |
| E9 (AG) | 1-3-4-2-5 | Y | Past-present |
| E10 (AG) | 1-4-2-3-5 | Y | Present perfect-past |

*Note*: Y = use of impressive opening, N = no use of impressive opening

**TABLE 17**
**Genre-Specific Rhetorical Features in the Pre-Treatment Writing**

| Participant | Move order pattern | Impressive opening | Tense change (1st move->2nd) |
|---|---|---|---|
| S1 (L) | 4 | N | Past-present |
| S4 (L) | 4-2 | N | Past-present |
| S9 (L) | 4 | N | Present |
| S11 (L) | 4 | N | Present-past |
| S20 (L) | 4 | N | Past-present |
| S10 (H) | 4-2-5 | N | Past-present |
| S21 (H) | 4-3-5 | N | Present-past |
| S26 (H) | 4-3-2 | N | Present-past |
| S29 (H) | 4-2-3-5 | N | Past-present |
| S30 (H) | 4-2-3-5 | N | Past-present |

Although most students began with the sentence *I was born*~ in the earlier writing, which is past tense, many of them used the impressive opening in their post-treatment

compositions. They use maxims or adages they hold valuable in their impressive opening, using the present tense or the present perfect.

In the students' writing, the reason why move 2 appears less frequently might be attributable to the fact that they have not decided their majors yet since they are second year high school students. Meanwhile, more specific things about intended majors should be well expressed in the exemplars because those writers had a better knowledge of the majors of the university of their choice.

**TABLE 18**
**Genre-Specific Rhetorical Features in the Post-Treatment Writing**

| Participants | Move order pattern | Impressive opening | Tense change (1st move->2nd) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S1 (L) | 4-3 | N | Present-past |
| S4 (L) | 2-5-4-6 | N | Present |
| S9 (L) | 2-4-5 | N | Present-past |
| S11 (L) | 4-3 | N | Present-past |
| S20 (L) | 3-4-5 | N | Present perfect-past |
| S10 (H) | 1-4-3-5 | Y | Present-past |
| S21 (H) | 1-3-4-6 | Y | Present-past |
| S26 (H) | 1-4-3-5-6 | Y | Present-past |
| S29 (H) | 4-3-2-5 | N | Present-past |
| S30 (H) | 1-3-2-4-5-6 | Y | Present perfect-past |

# V.   CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of genre-based writing in an EFL high school. At first, there was a question of whether it was possible to adapt a genre-based writing approach to novice students who had little English writing experience. However, Hyland (2002) stated that genre-based writing is more useful in teaching beginners than the process approach. Despite the weakness of the genre-approach indicated by process approach supporters such as prescriptive and reproductive features, the researcher cannot help but be interested in the features of genre-based instruction as a writing teacher of beginning writers in English.

Unfortunately, there has been little empirical research on genre-based instruction. It was a little hard work to adapt genre-based instruction into a EFL writing class. Through a few ESL genre-based instruction research with a different genre such as Hyon's (2001), a procedure could be peeped. As an overall result, students who have thought writing itself was a burden learned the feature of the application letter genre through reading model samples and explicit move instruction which could be used in their own academic application letters, and showed significant improvement in their composition of English application letters by using a number of necessary moves and steps.

The results according to the research questions were that writing instruction using genre-based approach for high school students in Korea shows a possibility to be successfully adapted to the EFL writing classroom. While the students initially balked at the idea of writing in English, encouragement and reassurance about not having to worry about the errors of linguistic features seemed to ease their concerns. Though they made quite a few errors in their writing, they acquired an understanding of writing application letters and their confidence when it comes to write in English.

The difference between higher level and lower level students is shown in the move order pattern and the number of moves used and the length of the composition. Higher-level students used a greater variety of moves than low proficient students. Higher-level students also made longer compositions. However, as the results clearly point out, lower-level students improved their writing in terms of moves, meaning that they included necessary content considering the readers' stances, despite many errors and a reliance on short sentences.

The researcher hopes that this might lead to greater studies on writing instruction at the secondary level of EFL level. More research on writing in the EFL context would be needed and should be performed in the classroom. As the frameworks of the academic application letter genre or personal statements in the aspect of moves and steps have not been clearly defined by other researchers, it was cautious to use the moves and steps defined by the researcher and a colleague researcher. Therefore, there is a need to study the framework of various genres that can be used in the secondary writing classroom. Yang and Allison (2003) also stated the need of framework in the systematic genre analysis and the research of its pedagogical influence. Developments of moves and steps in the genre-based writing class seem to be required in further studies. As Johns (1995) pointed out, we should attempt to create a program that draws sociocultural theories held by students through examination of familiar genres, moving into the academic as students become comfortable with the analysis. It is needed to help the students understand the complex components in text construction instead of letting students wander through a single writing process or writing alone.

Due to the limited time and consideration of genre-based instruction, it cannot be said that this study was completed to the full satisfaction. It is thought to be a small starting point for future research.

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