An Action Research on the Integration of Process Writing and Genre-Based Approach in Enhancing Narrative Writing Ability

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on classroom teaching problems and the solutions in teaching English narrative writing at university level. Based on the main problem of students' obstacles in writing a narrative paragraph, the integration of process writing and genre-based approach was carried out as a solution so as to investigate the effect of the integrated approach in enhancing Thai students' narrative paragraph writing ability, and their attitudes toward the integrated approach. The participants were 15 first-year English majors at a Rajabhat University, selected by purposive sampling. The action research was designed with a spiral structure with four research loops including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The study also showed the progress in narrative paragraphs from two lesson plans, based on an integrated approach by making the class student-centered through collaboration, group discussion, conference writing, and extensive feedback exchange. After data collection from a pretest, a posttest, a semi-structured interview, and a self-reflection paper, mean scores and content analysis were used for data analysis. The findings indicated that the participants' narrative writing ability significantly improved; this was determined by their pretest at 33.00 and posttest scores at 75.87. The participants responded positively to the usefulness of the six steps of writing process based on the integration of process writing and genre-based approach in teaching narrative paragraph writing skills.

Keywords: Genre-based Approach, Process Writing, Narrative Enhancement, Writing Ability

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Introduction

Teaching writing is crucial at all levels of language studies. In the process of globalized integration, English writing in Thailand has played an important role in transferring messages among countries in many aspects of life. Lanon (2011) suggests that the general purpose of all writing is to communicate a useful message to serve the readers' need—one that makes the writer's meaning clear and enables readers to see things from the writers' perspective. Consequently, writing is a key factor in education and so is taught from primary through secondary and tertiary levels in Thailand. It is undeniable that writing has been the most challenging task of English language teaching and learning in terms of English as Foreign Language (EFL) context, even with an adult native speaker (Hyland, 2003).

According to English Language Teaching (ELT) experience of the researcher in teaching writing at university level in Thailand, it has been found that problems persist at all levels of students in paragraph writing. EFL students at university level have learned various genres of writing, such as a description, a narrative, an article, an essay, and so on. Among those genres, narrative writing is a compulsory subject of general education. From the observation and interview during the learning process, their obstacles in writing can be seen mainly on content, language, organization, and mechanical skills. While there were general difficulties in grammar errors, an appropriate selection of vocabulary, and punctuations, a lot of Thai EFL learners encountered obstacles in generating ideas for and writing components of a narrative paragraph. They had problems in each move of different genres. Especially, they did not know how to write and organize their ideas properly in a

paragraph, and usually these written sentences were repeated in the paragraph.

There are a number of studies which have made use of the process writing and genre-based approaches (GBA henceforth) in writing classes to solve these problems. Payaprom (2012) found the positive impact on the literacy development of 14 EFL third-year tertiary students in Chiang Rai. Elashri (2013) stated that GBA instruction improved secondary students' writing performance. Luu (2011) examined the impact of GBA on 45 first-year students in Vietnam who wrote essays in the biographical recount genre. In addition, Chaisiri (2010) implemented GBA with 21 EFL writing teachers and 40 second-year EIC-major students who used combination of approaches and many aspects of the teaching including the notion of genre. However, this study gave a survey on teaching approaches rather than tried to improve the teaching of writing among participants. In terms of process approach, Rohmatika (2014) found that the use of a process approach gave better results than a product approach under an experimental study at a Tukey junior high school. Kaya & Ateş (2016) showed effective results of process-based writing that focused on the metacognitive skills of 64 Turkish fourth-grade students. In Thailand, Ngamchron (2017) conducted an experimental design with effective process writing approach at the level of 0.05, and their students' overall satisfaction. Sibua-on et al. (2016) studied 23 Pratomsuksa 6 students in Nong Khai with the results of the students' pretest and post-test scores on the English writing ability test at 0.91 percent and 75.42 percent, respectively. In addition, there have been several studies on the integrated process-genre approach in English writing classes. Assaggaf (2016) reported positive views of 17

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Arab EFL computer science university students of EFL students in report writing. In the same vein, Xu & Li (2018) stated that advanced EFL students for a doctoral program benefited significantly through reading and analyzing peer-reviewed journal articles and becoming familiar with the peer-review criteria for assessing academic texts. However, this study technique is too advanced to apply to novice writers.

In general, both approaches from these studies show significant benefits by using the genre-based approach and process writing in a writing class. However, they used separated approaches, with various kinds of writing purposes (the review genre, details, essays, reports, etc.), and at different grade levels (secondary school, high school students, junior university, or doctoral level). In other words, there have been only few studies on a combined approach of genre-based and process writing on narration. Nevertheless, the researcher believed that the combined approach could help students become better at writing narrative paragraphs. Thus, the researcher applied the process writing and the genre-based approaches to help Thai students enhance their narrative writing ability; as well as fill in the gap of theories on EFL teaching and learning.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the effect of integration of process writing and genre-based approach in enhancing Thai students' narrative paragraph writing ability

2. To investigate students' attitudes toward the integration of process writing and genre-based approach in enhancing Thai students' narrative paragraph writing ability.

Literature Review

Narrative Writing

Narrative writing describes essentially a story that is created in a constructive format that describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events; its function is to entertain and to deal with actual or vicarious experiences in different ways. It deals with a problematic sequence of events that lead up to a crisis or climax before finding a resolution (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). According to Hyvärinen (2008), the four stages of narrative structure were concerned with the following. Orientation: the scene is set up by introducing characters, setting, and time of the story. Complication and events: activities and events involving the main characters are expanded upon. Resolution: the complication is resolved. Extras: a lesson or code after the story.

The rubric scoring used to assess the students' narrative writing ability was based on the work of Jacobs, et. al (1981) in Haswell (2007), and Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Hughey's in Brown (2004, p. 246) as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Evaluation Scale Used in Academic Writing (Brown, 2004)

Content	extent, relevance, subject knowledge	30
Organization	coherence, fluency, clarity, logical sequencing	20
Vocabulary	richness, appropriate register, word form mastery	20
Syntax	accuracy (usage of articles, word order, tenses, prepositions, sentence constructions)	25
Mechanics	paragraphing, spelling, capitalization, punctuation	5
Total		100

Process Writing Approach

Process writing is an approach to writing, where language learners focus on the process by which they produce their written products rather than on the products themselves. According to Reid (1993, p. 260), cognitivists see writing as "a thinking and problem-solving process". The writing process provides students with a chain of stages to follow, allowing them to transfer their ideas to the concrete written text, which helps participants overcome the fear of the blank page and confidently begin the writing process step by step. Since cognitivists began to investigate the writing process and process teaching, they have been interested in the model of Flower and Hayes (1981). By adopting and adapting their process, the researcher followed a natural routine for the process of writing, which includes four steps: planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

Genre-Based Approach

According to Mulvaney & Jolliffe (2005), genre is a term that references specific types of writing, such as a lab report, case study, journal entry, or web page. Understanding genre helps writers to make good decisions about what organizational patterns and formatting conventions are to be used. The genre approach has a crucial role in literacy due to its concentration on both the production and analysis of texts in a given language. In the writing classroom, the teacher is likely to use the work of Hyland (2003) for the teaching-learning cycle of contextualizing-modeling-negotiating-constructing. Student writers become gradually familiar with the tasks, the structure, context, and language for constructing genres with the teacher. The teacher plays a key role in providing writers chances to develop their writing skills by being their mentor, guiding them on how to describe and control the grammatical and genre features of their text.

The Integration of Process Writing and Genre-Based Approach

In this study, the adapted teaching cycle of Hyland (2003) was used in class with six writing steps based on the four stages of acion research as shown in Table 2.

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Table 2 Six Writing Steps of Process Writing and Genre–Based Approach

Pre–writing (writing with the class)	
Step 1: Building knowledge of the field	
– Small group for clustering	
Step 2: Collaborative Exploration of the genre	
– Context exploration of genre	– Text exploration
– Clustering discussion	– Group discussion
– Whole–class discussion	
Step 3: Joint text construction	
– Class outline writing session	– Set out the writing prompts for group–work
– Various graphic organizer application	– Attempt 1st draft of narrative writing
– Group–work presentation and discussion	– Reflective conferencing questions
Whist–writing (independently)	
Step 4: Independent Text Construction and Drafting	
– Individual outline writing	– Provide criteria of writing rubric
– Set out the writing prompt for individuals	– Allow multiple drafts
– Reflective conferencing questions	
Step 5: Revising	
– Distribution of first drafts to peers	– Small group writing conference and peer response
– Integrate comments and feedback from peers	
– Apply revision checklist	
Step 6: Editing	
– Apply editing checklist	– Submit the final drafts

The teaching and learning procedure was described as follows.

Stage 1: Planning

In this stage, the researcher had to prepare all the necessary teaching materials, worksheets, handouts and classroom equipments for data collection. Before the implementation, the pre–test was carried out in the first period of teaching and learning process to examine students' ability in writing.

Stage 2: Acting

Step 1: Building knowledge of field

To raise participants' awareness of genre and the participants' background knowledge, they were asked various questions related to the model narrative texts to increase their familiarity with the tasks, the structure, context, and language for and the paragraph components in narrative writing. The participant–teacher interactions and participant–participant interactions were added for collaborated writing in clustering groups.

Step 2: Collaborative exploration of the genre

This step familiarized participants with the language features and social context of the narrative genre. By reading and analyzing the text with class, paying attention to the writing's organizational pattern (the moves of narrative paragraph), and participants were guided to the important settings and sequence of events to outline the story's structure. After that, in the class group discussion, they shared and exchanged knowledge of the target genre in groups of participants and with the whole class.

Step 3: Joint–text construction

The purpose of this step was to scaffold participants to have a comprehensive understanding of narrative paragraph and process writing. Participants created an outline and construct their writing by using a given graphic organizational pattern based on the events and other components of a narrative paragraph. First, participants were requested to work in small groups and write a narrative paragraph based on the previous learned graphic organizer to arrange their ideas, and the given criteria of rubric writing. Then, a group presentation for receiving feedback and the class conference in groups were held. The teacher played a vital role in supporting and explaining any unclear points in their story.

Step 4: Individual text construction and drafting

Prior to writing, the scoring rubric criteria were provided, and the prompts were explained. The teacher guided participants in the pre–writing stage to draw an outline. The writing conference occurred after the writing outline. The participants collaboratively learned how to write a paragraph for the first draft individually. From the outline writing, they followed the provided writing prompt to produce their paragraph, based on

their individual experience. To help participants have a clear understanding, the teacher observed the class interaction throughout their writing activities, and walked around the classroom to give advice, if needed. Their written paragraphs were collected to submit to the teacher in the end.

Step 5: Revising

The participants' first drafts were distributed to their peers after discussing the revised checklist. The focus was the specific features of narrative paragraphs. Working in groups for feedback was requested. Then, a small group writing conference was held to provide each participant with the feedback from their peers. The participants were then able to revise their writing based on the feedback. Finally, their written paragraphs were collected to submit to the teacher in the end of the stages.

Step 6: Editing

The participants applied a similar process of revision as in the previous step; however, the writing conference was based on feedback from the teacher rather than their peers. The checklist was given based on all five aspects. Finally, their written paragraphs were collected to submit to the teacher.

Stage 3: Observing

During the acting stage, the researcher observed the participants' learning behaviour in classroom and noted down in the teacher's diary. Through observation, it can be captured how much effect the action has on the target. In this step, the researcher identified and analyzed the data collected during the treatment.

Stage 4: Reflecting

Reflecting is an activity to restate what has been achieved. In this step, the researcher observed whether the action activity result in any improvement.

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To support the research study, the researcher used observation, test, and documentation to gather the data.

Research Methodology

1. Participants and setting

The study was conducted at a university in the northeastern Thailand. The curriculum is based on the General Education Courses in accordance with the Ministry of Education's policy. English courses are taught by 17 teachers in all four levels of students from first to fourth year. The participants were 15 Thai first-year undergraduate English major students with no background in narrative paragraph writing. They were mixed genders with mixed English proficiency levels and diverse backgrounds.

2. Research Instruments

2.1 The Prewriting Test and Post Writing Test A pre-writing test (pretest) was administered to examine the participants' writing ability before the implementation. The instruction supplied was: "Write a narrative paragraph in 250 words of an unforgettable trip". After the implementation of the integrated process writing and genre-based approach, a post-writing test (posttest) was administered to evaluate the students' progress. The participants were given the same instruction as the pretest. A writing ability checklist was used to assess the participants' progress in narrative paragraph writing. Three raters scored the pre- and posttests.

2.2 Self-Reflection Paper

This paper was used to ask the participants to reflect on their perceptions about the usefulness of process writing and genre-based approach for narrative paragraph writing. It allows the assessment of the participants' progress both in terms of writing and how

they could make use of the integrated approach to enhance their own narrative paragraph writing.

2.3 A Semi-Structured Interview

The interview was conducted after the implementation in groups to investigate participants' attitudes toward the effectiveness of the integrated approach. The questions allowed the participants to reflect their attitudes toward the integration of process writing and the genre-based approach. The semi-structured interview was verified by experts in the field of foreign language learning and teaching. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

3. Procedures

The study took place over two weeks in the first semester of the 2019 academic year, between July and August, and totaled 18 hours.

3.1 In the first week, participants were given a test on narrative paragraph writing before the implementation in order to compare their writing ability after the implementation.

3.2 The action research design included six writing steps. During the implementation, participants were requested to use the self-reflection paper to detail the extent to which they felt that they had made progress in their writing and how they could improve through the integrated approach. The lesson plans and the teacher's diary were also used to assess the effectiveness of the lesson plans.

3.3 After the implementation, a test on narrative paragraph writing was given and a semi-structured interview was conducted to investigate participants' attitudes toward the integrated approach. Finally, the data was analyzed and coded to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the approach and to examine the participants' attitudes.

4. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. First, the analytic scoring rubric was used, with three raters for inter–rater reliability, to assess participants' narrative paragraph writing ability in the pretest and posttest. The scoring rubric was adapted from the composition for scoring writing in Brown (2004), Ministry of Education (2014) and Scoring Guide: Narrative Writing: Standards for Students' Writing (Pederson, 2019). The pretest and posttest were scored by Mean Score.

Findings

1. Students' Writing Ability

Table 3 The Mean Score of the Writing Test

No	Content		Organization		Vocabulary		Syntax		Mechanics		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
St1	10	25	10	20	10	16	13	22	2	3	45	86
St2	10	25	6	20	8	17	5	20	2	4	31	86
St3	10	21	6	20	7	17	5	22	2	4	30	84
St4	12	22	12	20	8	16	5	20	3	3	40	81
St5	10	20	8	20	10	15	5	22	2	3	35	80
St6	12	21	8	20	10	15	7	18	2	4	39	78
St7	12	23	12	20	9	12	5	18	2	5	40	78
St8	10	21	12	20	8	12	5	20	2	4	37	77
St9	10	20	10	20	10	12	13	22	2	2	45	76
St10	9	18	5	20	5	12	5	22	1	3	25	75
St11	10	20	10	18	10	12	13	22	2	2	45	74
St12	8	20	3	20	5	10	3	20	1	3	20	73
St13	6	15	2	20	4	10	2	17	1	3	15	65
St14	10	15	12	20	7	12	5	15	2	3	36	65
St15	5	18	2	20	2	10	2	10	1	2	12	60
											495	1138
											33.00	75.87

Table 3 shows the mean scores from three raters for reliability of the pre–writing test and the post–writing test before and after the implementation of the integrated approach. As can be seen in Table 3, the mean socres of the pre–test were lower than the posttest, 33 out of 100 and 75.87 out of 100 respectively. These low socres of students' writing ability at the beginning indicate that they did not possess a high level of inadequate knowledge in narrative paragraph writing. However, most of the participants showed significant improvement in the post writing. They enhanced their writing skills when they moved from the first draft to the final draft. It is obvious that the integrated approach enhanced participants' narrative paragraph writing ability.

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2. Improvement of Writing Ability in Five Aspects

As soon as the participants had been assigned to write a self-reflection paper, they reflected on the integrated approach, and how this learning approach could help them enhance their writing in terms of five aspects of rubric scoring. Firstly, the participants were guided to structure their ideas logically, and to choose content to write. At first, they wrote many details to tell the story, but these details were not essential for readers to have a clear understanding of their story. After a writing conference, they got feedbacks from their peers and teacher, and they could rewrite their story with more details. Secondly, some participants indicated that they were reluctant to write before, because they had to write individually, and did not have sufficient vocabulary ranges. However, this learning experience changed their feeling. During the writing process, they solved this by asking friends and using a dictionary. In general, by using guidelines from genre-based and process writing, they felt more confident to write a paragraph in steps. Consequently, this helped participants make progress in their writing ability. Thirdly, in this learning, the participants were guided on how to structure their ideas logically, and how to write a narrative paragraph following the organization of the narrative. Someone said that they could write in order by using logical words at the end of writing, and they would follow this approach in the future. Fourthly, participants showed their interest in the integrated approach in terms of syntax improvement. Before learning, they said that they used present simple tense in their writing. Later, they said that there were many steps to write, so they could revise and fix their grammar correctly. Finally, the participants viewed that their writing improved in terms of mechanics after learning through this integrated approach. The process writing helped them in the editing stage to amend some kinds of mechanics before submitting their writing paragraph.

3. Participants' Attitudes toward the Integrated Approach

By interviewing the participants from three groups, their answers were analyzed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the integrated approach of process writing and genre-based in enhancing their narrative writing ability. They reflected on the learning procedure through six writing steps.

3.1 Collaboration

In the same manner, the participants showed their positive attitudes in favor of collaboration to write an effective narrative paragraph. Building knowledge of field and collaboration exploration of genre activities guide participants on how to write a narrative paragraph as a whole class and in small groups. Besides, the participants also show their interest in comments and feedbacks from their peers and the teacher, which motivate and encourage participants to develop their writing ability, as well as make them feel more confident. Their writing paragraphs are shown in five aspects, content, organization, vocabulary, syntax, and mechanics.

3.2 Writing Process

The writing process accounted for the participants' positive attitudes toward the integrated approach to enhance narrative paragraph writing ability. Considering pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, the participants indicated that they liked to write in steps as it enhanced their writing ability. In the first step, pre-writing helped them to brief ideas and

to cluster them into a logical sequence. Through multiple drafts and extensive feedbacks, most of them felt that they found it easy to have a productive revising process. Although many participants faced the problems from the very first writing, they kept trying their best to write and enhance their writing ability. It helped them to save time, and to go straight to their point. This issue will be discussed further in the next section.

Discussion

The research findings show that the participants made progress in process writing. At the beginning, the test showed that they had inadequate knowledge in paragraph writing. However, the results in the final test after the implementation and the final draft during the implementation were higher in all five aspects of writing. All students gradually improved their writing ability toward the end of the implementation of the study. It was obvious that the students enhanced their writing ability in paragraph writing through process writing. This finding was in accordance with the work by Rohmatika, 2014; Ngamchron, 2017; Sibua-on et al., 2016, which revealed that the process writing approach yielded better results than the product approach. The research showed that the process writing approach was more suitable for novice writers.

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that the use of genre-based approach in EFL context was beneficial for students to enhance the narrative paragraph writing, of which content was a counted point. It was inferred that by building knowledge of the field, the genre-based approach helped participants to become familiar with the topics. Then, they could make use of the background knowledge in a similar field of genre to be aware of what to write. The findings follow the findings of Chaisiri, 2010; Luu, T, 2011;

Payaprom, 2012, who indicated that by building their understanding of the situation, the students could formulate their thoughts, generate ideas, and focus attention on the topics; that is to say they could also gain control of the review genre to write what they think about from the topic to supporting details.

The finding of the mean score shows the significant benefits of the integrated approach in a writing class. Through six writing steps of the integrated approach, during which students developed their ideas in pre-writing, writing multiple drafts, getting extensive feedback and collaborative learning in the revision and edition process, the participants improved their writing ability in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, syntax, and mechanics. The reason why the mean scores rose from 33 at the beginning to 75.87 after implementation was due to the productive use of the integrated approach to alleviate their initial inadequate knowledge in paragraph writing and narrative writing in particular. While teaching genre helps students discard the lack of narrative moves, teaching process writing supports them to develop systematic thinking. The integration of process writing and genre-based approach could enhance students in these two aspects. The integrated approach helped students learn the rhetorical patterns of narrative genres and write in accepted ways based on collaborative learning. Furthermore, students made progress from multiple drafts, and extensive feedbacks, and developed more confidence in writing a narrative paragraph. It was observable that the students learn through the integrated approach, and revealed knowledge in the feature of prototypical structure and text organization, and also of cohesive paragraphs. This finding was in accordance with the work by Assaggaf, 2016 ; Xu & Li, 2018,

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which verified the usefulness and power of these two approaches, when one approach was not replaced entirely by the other one. According to the earlier studies cited, it is suggested that the implementation of approaches is more beneficial to the students' writing, and it is suitable to apply to advanced EFL students. However, in this study, the results of the implementation of the integrated approach indicated that the process writing and genre approach significantly helped novice writers in terms of narrative paragraph writing.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Some suggestions and recommendations for further studies are as followed.

1. The integration of process writing and genre-based approaches should be conducted in different genres in terms of paragraph types, such as description paragraph, cause-effect paragraph, and so on.

2. Other levels of writing should also be investigated, especially the essay level, which needs a higher knowledge of writing genres.

3. The study of the integration of process writing and genre-based approach should be extended to other variables, such as anxiety reduction in writing, emotional intelligence, and so on.

In conclusion, the researcher believes that the study enhanced EFL students' narrative paragraph writing ability by implementing the integration of process writing and genre-based approaches in EFL writing classes. Furthermore, the research productively contributes to the teaching and learning of English in EFL or L2 contexts through the use of the integrated approach of process writing and genre-based writing to enhance university students' writing ability.

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