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Connecting Reading and Writing in Foreign Language Instruction: A Process-genre Approach

Orathai Chaiya Jarunthawatchai [a], Wisut Jarunthawatchai [b,*], Lester Gilbert [c]

[a] orathaichaiya.j@ku.th, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science, Kasetsart University, Thailand
[b] faaswsj@ku.ac.th, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science, Kasetsart University, Thailand
[c] lg11@soton.ac.uk, School of Electronics and Computer Science, University of Southampton, UK
[*] Corresponding author, faaswsj@ku.ac.th

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how connecting reading and writing through a process-genre approach enhances EFL learners' academic writing competence. Based on quantitative and qualitative data, the study demonstrates that students made statistically significant improvements across seven writing traits, with the most substantial gains observed in discourse-level features—interestingness, organization, content, and cohesion. These developments were supported by students' growing genre awareness acquired through scaffolded reading and analyzing of model texts, collaborative and independent writing tasks, and reflective activities. The findings also reveal how students systematically applied genre knowledge to their own compositions, particularly in understanding writing contexts, communicative purposes, and audience expectations. While improvements in linguistic accuracy and appropriacy were more moderate, students reported that they gained more

confidence in writing. Through engagement with the reading and writing activities, students could observe how meaning is constructed in texts and apply these insights into their writing. This study underscores the pedagogical significance of connecting reading and writing within a process-genre instruction to enhance meaningful writing development.

Keywords: process-genre approach, reading-writing connection, academic writing development, genre awareness

Introduction

Writing, particularly in a foreign language, is complex by nature. Hyland (2019, p. 22) defined writing as a "socio-cognitive activity," emphasizing that writers need to utilize knowledge of composing processes and an understanding of context, social purposes, audience expectations, and relevant linguistic features to produce successful texts in a particular context. In this regard, the process-genre approach has been proposed to develop learners' writing competence by incorporating process-oriented skills—such as planning, drafting, and revising—with genre awareness, which helps learners recognize rhetorical structures and linguistic features appropriate to specific communicative events.

Another critical, yet underexplored, dimension of writing complexity is the connection between reading and writing, particularly in foreign language. As Kroll (1993) argued, "Teaching writing without teaching reading is not teaching writing at all" (p. 75), emphasizing the interrelatedness of these two skills. Scholars continue to emphasize this interconnectedness, highlighting reading serves as the solid foundation for writing as it provides exposure to a wide range of rhetorical structures, linguistic resources and socio-literacy contexts (e.g. Grabe & Zhang, 2016; Hirvela, 2004). Thus, systematic instruction is needed to support learners in transferring the knowledge gained from reading into their own writing (Johns, 1997; Tardy, 2025).

Empirical studies in Asian contexts have demonstrated the effectiveness of the process-genre approach in improving learners' writing competence, particularly in enhancing their rhetorical organization, linguistic resources, and metacognitive awareness (Huang & Zhang, 2020, 2022; Rahimi, 2024; Wardhana, 2022). In the Thai EFL context, research has similarly shown that explicit instruction based on the process-genre approach contributed to the development of writing competence in academic writing (Janenoppakarn, 2016; Jarunthawatchai, 2010; Peungcharoenkun & Waluyo, 2023; Rachawong & Phusawisot, 2025; Samaranayake et al., 2025).

Drawing on findings from classroom-based research (e.g. Jarunthawatchai, 2010, 2018), Thai university students continue to face challenges in L2 academic writing, particularly in rhetorical organization, content development, language issues, and awareness of context and audience expectations. Recent teacher-focused research also echoes challenges encountered by Thai lecturers in EFL writing instruction, such as managing students with limited writing proficiency, addressing complex writing tasks, and balancing language accuracy with content development (Bowen et al., 2023). These persistent difficulties may stem from limited exposure to sample texts and insufficient integration of reading into writing instruction. As reading provides essential input for developing genre awareness and supporting textual production, L2 scholars have long emphasized the importance of connecting reading and writing for comprehensive literacy development (e.g., Grabe & Zhang, 2016; Hirvela, 2004; Johns, 1997).

Despite the emphasis on reading–writing connections in L2 instruction (e.g. Hirvela, 2004; Tardy, 2025), the role of reading within process-genre instruction remains underexplored. Previous studies, both in Thailand and other Asian EFL contexts, have typically treated reading as a peripheral activity rather than a central pedagogical element (e.g. Huang & Zhang, 2020; Jarunthawatchai, 2010; Peungcharoenkun & Waluyo, 2023; Wardhana, 2022). As a result, the ways in which learners engage with and apply knowledge from reading in their writing process have not been adequately examined.

The present study builds on previous process-genre research by incorporating reading as a core component within the process-genre teaching and learning cycle. It aims to investigate how reading contributes to the development of writing competence and how learners transfer knowledge gained from reading into their own writing process. By addressing this issue, the study provides a practical instructional approach that explicitly connects reading and writing, which is particularly significant for language teachers and curriculum designers in higher education.

This study addresses the following research questions:

1) To what extent does the process-genre approach enhance EFL learners' writing competence?
    1.1) Is there a statistically significant improvement in students' writing competence from pre-test to post-test across multiple traits?
    1.2) Which specific traits of writing show the most significant improvement after the process-genre intervention?
    1.3) What are the interrelationships among changes in different writing traits?

2) How do EFL learners perceive the role of reading in developing their writing competence?
   2.1) What specific writing knowledge do students gain after the instruction?
   2.2) How does the knowledge gained from reading contribute to students' writing development?

Literature Review

Reading–Writing Connections

According to Eisterhold (1990), reading and writing are essential skills for academic literacy in higher education. Connecting reading and writing can accelerate literacy development by helping learners see how these skills operate together. Eisterhold proposed three models of reading–writing relationships. The directional model views reading as input for writing, with rhetorical and textual knowledge flowing from reading to writing. The non-directional model emphasizes shared fundamental cognitive processes of reading and writing. Since both reading and writing involve the construction of meaning, learners benefit from recognizing the reciprocal influence these skills have on each other. Finally, the bidirectional model presents the most complex relationship, viewing reading and writing as "interactive" and "interdependent" (Eisterhold, 1990, p. 92). It stresses that various interconnected factors shape how these skills influence each other, and that these relationships evolve as learners develop.

Within Eisterhold's framework, directional reading-to-writing connections are the most adopted orientation for practical implementation as reading often serves as the primary input for writing. Hirvela (2004) argued for incorporating reading into the L2 writing classroom. Reading provides essential rhetorical and linguistic input as well as socially situated content knowledge, especially for students with limited input of language sources in the L2 context. Similarly, Grabe and Zhang (2016) further indicated that integrating reading into writing instruction is critical to academic success. By exploring, analyzing, and engaging with discipline-specific readings, L2 learners can enhance their comprehension and transfer textual understandings to their own writing. Extending this perspective, Tardy (2025) argued that students build their genre repertoire through reading and writing as they progress, so it is essential to help them identify and apply key genre elements in writing through integrated reading–writing approaches.

Complementing these theoretical perspectives, several empirical studies have investigated how reading can be effectively integrated in L2 instruction to enhance writing development. In particular, the role of

metacognitive genre awareness has been a focus in L2 writing development. Negretti and Kuteeva (2011) illustrated that explicit instruction on rhetorical structures and conventions enhances understanding of genre awareness and how academic writing is constructed. This is consistent with Johns' (1997) calls for integrating reading and writing in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction, emphasizing that reading enables students to be able to view texts as socially constructed practices, reflecting the writer's goals, readers' expectations, and socio-literacy context.

Focusing specifically on pre-writing stages, Delaney (2008) and Yoshimura (2009) highlighted the benefits of reading tasks for pre-writing stages. Delaney (2008) argued that reading-to-write demands skills beyond ordinary comprehension reading, involving evaluation of a source's credibility and information structure. Building on this, Yoshimura (2009) further emphasized the effectiveness of pre-writing reading checklists, which provide learners with content knowledge, rhetorical organization, and language forms to develop writing competence. Likewise, Linuwih's (2021) maintained that intensive reading provides students with knowledge in content, organization and vocabulary which is important in the development of academic writing skills.

Turning to the development of linguistic resources, Tatsanajamsuk (2024) found that reading-to-write methods can enhance grammatical complexity for effective composition in argumentative essays. Similarly, Chuenchaichon (2011) revealed that the intensive reading on paragraph development improves grammatical accuracy and fluency.

Regarding more advanced reading-into-writing strategies, Chan (2018) demonstrated that as learners progress, they refine their reading-into-writing strategies alongside their academic development, i.e. more proficient students demonstrate higher-level task representation, intertextual connections, and revisions in post-writing stage. The findings affirm that scaffolding is essential in developing a more sophisticated reading-writing connections, resulting in improvement of writing at a more advanced level.

These studies, collectively, emphasize the critical role of reading in providing learners with fundamental principles of texts, along with rhetorical structures and linguistic resources in their writing development in L2 context. In this study, we argue that a process-genre approach can be an alternative approach that enables learners to draw on reading in a systematic way—incorporating insights about rhetorical structures, and language features, into their writing process. The following section outlines the pedagogical framework underpinning this integrated approach in enhancing reading and writing in L2 classrooms.

A Process-genre Approach

A process-genre approach has emerged to address the complexity of writing. Writing is a "socio-cognitive activity" (Hyland, 2019, p. 22) that demands both cognitive composing processes and attention to context, audience, purpose and social context. Writers must know how to write and what to write for a specific context. In classroom practices, while the process approach focuses on planning, drafting, and revising, often requiring multiple drafts, it may neglect explicit explanations of language features needed for communicative purposes. In contrast, the genre approach highlights social contexts and provides explicit instruction on rhetorical structures and linguistic forms, yet it may overlook the complexity of writing process. An integration of process-oriented and genre-based approaches allows teachers to address limitations of each such that "the strengths of one might complement the weaknesses of the other" (Hyland, 2019, p. 22).

This integrated process-genre approach also underscores reading-writing connections. Reading provides crucial "knowledge of writing" (Hirvela, 2004, p. 112) by offering examples of how texts are produced. Similarly, Carrell and Connor (1991) suggested that explicit training in rhetorical structures for reading can facilitate writing. Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) reinforced this by stating that writers benefit when they "read like writers and write like readers" (p. 100). Teachers should guide students to recognize content while being aware of rhetorical arrangement, grammar patterns, and word choices. Through reading, learners can observe how authors utilize language and structure to serve specific purposes in context and meet audience expectations. These are insights they can then apply to their own compositions.

Many scholars advocate the integration of process and genre approaches to create a more holistic view of writing. In practice, an integration of process and genre approaches "ensure that learners have an adequate understanding of the *processes* of text creation, *purposes* of writing, an *awareness* of particular audiences and how to express these through text choices" (Hyland, 2019, p. 23). From a reading and writing perspective, the process-genre approach highlights reading as a scaffold for writing. Jarunthawatchai (2010) highlighted that reading model texts develops students' awareness of social contexts, audience expectations, text organization, and linguistic resources. These insights then guide them in planning, drafting, and revising their own draft, illustrating how reading supports writing development.

Numerous studies have shown the process-genre approach to be effective in developing foreign language writing, especially in Asian higher

education. Huang and Zhang (2020) found it more effective than traditional instruction in improving Chinese undergraduates' argumentative writing, particularly in content, organization, and language. Later, Huang and Zhang (2022) revealed that it also promotes stronger metacognitive strategies including increased discourse-level awareness relevant audience expectation in argumentative writing. Rahimi and Zhang (2022) reported that process-genre instruction gave Chinese learners significant writing skills knowledge, transforming them from anxious beginners to engaged, self-directed writers. In a later study, Rahimi (2024) suggested that integrating motivational strategies into the process-genre approach resulted in even greater engagement and developmental progress in argumentative writing. In addition to writing development, Wardhana (2022) demonstrated in the Indonesian context that undergraduate students under process-genre instruction also showed significant development in higher-order thinking skills—evaluation, analysis, and creation. This underscores the multifaceted benefits of process-genre pedagogy.

Research in the Thai context also provides convincing evidence that the process–genre approach promotes not only improvements in writing competence but also more profound learner engagement and confidence. Jarunthawatchai (2010) showed that students who received process–genre instruction applied genre conventions strategically throughout the composing process, resulting in significant improvement of written texts in terms of organization, content, and linguistic appropriacy. Janenoppakarn (2016) revealed that even though the implementation of the process-genre approach benefited students with higher- and lower proficiency, those with lower proficiency made greater gains in essay development than their higher-proficient peers at the end of the course; the marked progress linked to heightened motivation and more positive attitudes towards writing.

Subsequent innovative research, such as an integration of online writing platform by Peungcharoenkun and Waluyo (2023) and the development of tailor-made context-specific instructional materials by Samaranayake et al. (2025) within process-genre framework, resulted in significant improvement in Thai EFL undergraduates' academic writing competence. Moreover, a quasi-experimental study by Rachawong and Phusawisot (2025) demonstrated that the process-genre approach not only outperformed process-oriented instruction in the development of academic writing —particularly in content, organization, and vocabulary—but also significantly reduced learners' writing anxieties. Overall, these studies not only highlighted the effectiveness of the process-genre approach in developing writing competence but also demonstrated enhanced learner engagement, increased confidence, and greater strategic control in the writing process.

Although these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of process-genre instruction, they mostly emphasize writing skill development. Limited research has examined how this approach connects reading and writing to enhance academic literacy. Therefore, the present study investigates how a process-genre approach can connect these two skills and further enhance students' academic literacy development. This study has two main objectives. First, it examines whether students' writing mean scores increase significantly from pre-test to post-test, identifying which writing areas improve most and how their relationships may change. Second, it explores how learners perceive the role of reading in building their writing competence, focusing on knowledge gained from model texts and how it informs their subsequent writing competence.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a quasi-experimental one-group pre-test-post-test design. A single group of participants was initially assessed on a dependent variable (O1), received an experimental treatment (X), and then re-evaluated (O2) to determine the intervention's impact (Cohen et al., 2018). Writing competence was assessed through pre-test and post-test tasks at the beginning and the end of a 15-week writing course. The process-genre approach was implemented throughout the course, and changes in scores were analyzed to evaluate its effectiveness.

Participants

Seventy-eight second-year English major students voluntarily participated in this study. They enrolled in a 15-week English Writing Course at a public university in central Thailand. The participants belonged to intact classes and comprised 64 females and 14 males, aged between 19 and 20. Each participant attended over 80% of the scheduled classes and completed all writing tasks. Their proficiency level was considered intermediate. The study was granted approval by the University's Ethics Committee under reference COE65/030.

The Process-genre Writing Instruction

In the process-genre teaching instruction, Feez and Joyce's (1998) genre-based cycle and White and Arndt's (1991) process-oriented instruction were adapted to create a five-stage process-genre teaching and learning

instruction, that is, building the context, analysis of the model text, collaborative construction of the text, independent construction of the text, and reflection on writing, as depicted in Figure 1. Stages 1 and 2 concentrate on reading as a way to acquire knowledge about writing, which is then applied in writing processes in stages 3 and 4.

Figure 1

A Process–genre Teaching Model (Jarunthawatchai, 2010, p. 103)

The initial stages—building the context and analysis of the model text—focus on genre-based reading. Through exposure to model texts, learners acquire genre-related knowledge and linguistic resources. In building the context, reading a model text is a springboard for discussing its social context. Students read sample texts to uncover the text's purpose, readers' expectations, and communication modes. Then, in analysis of the model text, students are guided to explore writing conventions, e.g. rhetorical structures, grammatical elements, and vocabulary choices, and discuss how these language choices relate to the social context (Hyland 2019; Johns, 1997).

During the collaborative construction of the text, students are assigned to small groups and work on writing process such as generating, organizing, composing, and revising. With the teacher's guidance, they can systematically apply their understanding of genre, social context, and textual conventions as they plan, draft, and revise their texts. Later in the independent construction stage, students utilize their accumulated knowledge of genre and process writing from prior stages in order to produce the target text individually (Feez & Joyce, 1998; Hyland, 2019; White & Arndt, 1991).

Finally, in the reflection on writing stage, students examine their learning progress, the interrelationship between reading and writing, and their

understanding of the interplay between social factors and the writing process (Johns, 1997).

The Writing Course

The English Writing Course, fifteen weeks with three hours of in-class instruction each week, was designed for the second-year English major students in their first semester and served as the second in a four-course academic writing series. The course consisted of five units, being Fundamental writing concepts, Components of academic writing, Expository essay, Discussion essay, and an Argumentative essay. The course objective was to develop students' ability to compose well-structured essays, emphasizing coherent idea presentation and appropriate language use.

Data Collection

Pre-test and Post-test

At the beginning and end of the writing course, students composed discussion essays (ranging from 250 to 350 words) under timed test conditions. The purpose of the discussion essay was to present "a more sophisticated argument as it involves the consideration of an issue from several perspectives" (Knapp & Watkins, 2005, p.194). Macken-Horarik (2002) described the generic structure of the discussion essay as follows:

{Issue ^ Arguments for & against ^ Conclusion.}

The structure consists of three main parts: the issue, the arguments for and against, and the conclusion. Two different viewpoints on the issue were presented in the first part, followed by evidence or details to support and challenge the issue under consideration. It concluded with a brief summary and the writer's final position on the issue (Macken-Horarik, 2002; Knapp & Watkins, 2005).

Each essay was allotted one and a half hours for completion. The essay topics were as follows:

1. Do social networks destroy personal relationships?
2. High-technology smartphones: Do we spend too much money buying one?
3. Thai TV soap operas are bad for the public. Do you agree or disagree with this idea?
4. Can the use of tablet computers improve learning for young children?

Students wrote a discussion essay in response to one of the given topics. For the pre-test, all students were assigned Topic 1. In the post-test, the students chose one topic from the remaining three. Fourteen students selected Topic 2, 13 opted for Topic 3, and 51 students chose Topic 4. All students completed their essays within the allocated time. Reviews of their essays indicated that they comprehended the task requirements.

Interview

A semi-structured interview was selected in this study because the pre-prepared guiding questions with the flexibility of open-ended responses (Dörnyei, 2007) enabled the researchers to examine the writing knowledge students acquired from a process-genre instructional cycle and how this knowledge supported their writing development.

Twenty-four students voluntarily took part in semi-structured interview sessions to share their perspectives on the teaching approach after the post-test. The interviews were conducted in Thai and audio recorded, then transcribed verbatim and translated into English.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the Pre-test and the Post-test Data

To examine the progression of students' writing competencies across various features of academic writing, a multiple-trait marking system, adapted from Hamp-Lyons' (1991) profile scales, was employed to assess the students' texts in both pre-test and post-test. The adapted multiple-trait scoring scale was grounded on the sub-scales of communicative quality, interestingness, organization, content, cohesion, linguistic accuracy, and linguistic appropriacy. Each sub-scale was scored on a nine-band scale, with one being the lowest and nine the highest.

After the course, the students' essays were assessed by two experienced raters, a Thai lecturer with over five years of experience teaching English academic writing, and a native English speaker with more than 15 years of experience in English language teaching. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha, which varied from .76 to .62. This indicated very good agreement between the scores assigned by both raters. After establishing inter-rater reliability, discrepancies were resolved through discussions to reach agreement on the final mark to be given. The quantitative data analysis was conducted by the second and third authors. The scores were analyzed using SPSS.

Analysis of the Interview Data

The interview data were analyzed using NVivo, a software program for qualitative data analysis. The coding process followed a content analysis approach. Coding categories emerged from the data itself and were influenced by the researcher's theoretical understanding (Hyland, 2019). The coding process followed Dörnyei's (2007) three key strategies:

a) Open Coding –assigning conceptual categories to different segments to identify emerging patterns.
b) Axial Coding –grouping related categories into broader themes.
c) Selective Coding –interpreting salient data to highlight key findings and theoretical insights.

The coding process was conducted by the first and second authors, with emerging categories continuously refined throughout the analysis. The focus was the students' acquisition of genre knowledge and its contribution to writing development.

Findings

Quantitative Analysis Results

Comparison of Change Scores from Pre-test and Post-test

Descriptive statistics provided an overview of students' writing competence across seven writing traits before and after the process-genre instruction, as shown in Table 1. Pre-test mean scores ranged from 4.36 (Organization) to 5.21 (Communicative Quality), indicating moderate competence. Post-test means ranged from 5.48 (Linguistic Accuracy) to 6.74 (Organization), with higher averages observed across all writing traits.

Table 1

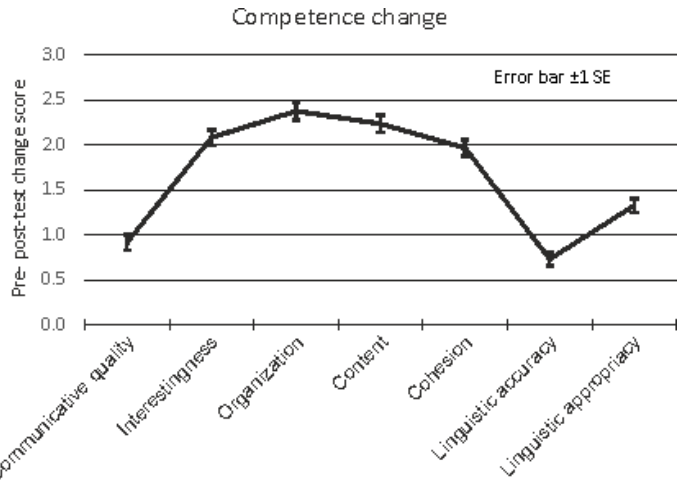
Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores Following Process-genre Instruction (N = 78)

Writing Trait	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)
Communicative Quality	5.21 (.94)	6.12 (.73)
Interestingness	4.43 (.82)	6.51 (.70)
Organization	4.36 (.95)	6.74 (.70)
Content	4.44 (.90)	6.67 (.66)
Cohesion	4.49 (.94)	6.46 (.74)
Linguistic Accuracy	4.75 (.86)	5.48 (.68)
Linguistic Appropriacy	4.47 (.69)	5.79 (.70)

A change score was calculated for each student's writing competence from before to after the intervention across the seven key writing traits: communicative quality, interestingness, organization, content, cohesion, linguistic accuracy, and linguistic appropriacy. The plot of change scores is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Plot of Mean Change Scores



A repeated measures one-way analysis of variance was calculated to investigate whether there were significant changes, and pairwise comparisons were calculated to identify which competences showed significantly higher changes. Mauchly's test of sphericity was significant, and subsequent statistical tests were carried out using the lower bound for Epsilon, reducing treatment degrees of freedom from 6 to 1, and error degrees of freedom from 462 to 77. The ANOVA summary table is given in Table 2.

Table 2

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Summary Table

Source	Type III SS	df	MS	F	p
Tests of Within-Subjects Effects					
Change	206.7	1	206.7	127.8	<.001
Error	124.5	77	1.62		
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Intercept	1510	1	1510	584.7	<.001
Error	198.8	77	2.58		

The Intercept effect showed that one or more of the mean competence change scores were significantly greater than zero. Inspection of the plot of change scores shows that all mean changes scores were several standard errors greater than zero. The subjects showed statistically significant improvement on all seven competence scores (Communicative quality, Interestingness, Organization, Content, Cohesion, Linguistic accuracy, and Linguistic appropriacy) from pre-test to post-test.

The Change effect showed that there were significant differences in mean change score for the competences. Pairwise comparisons confirmed the pattern seen in the plot of Figure 2. Greatest change was shown by Interestingness, Organization, Content, and Cohesion, all significantly higher than change in Communicative quality, Linguistic accuracy, and Linguistic appropriacy.

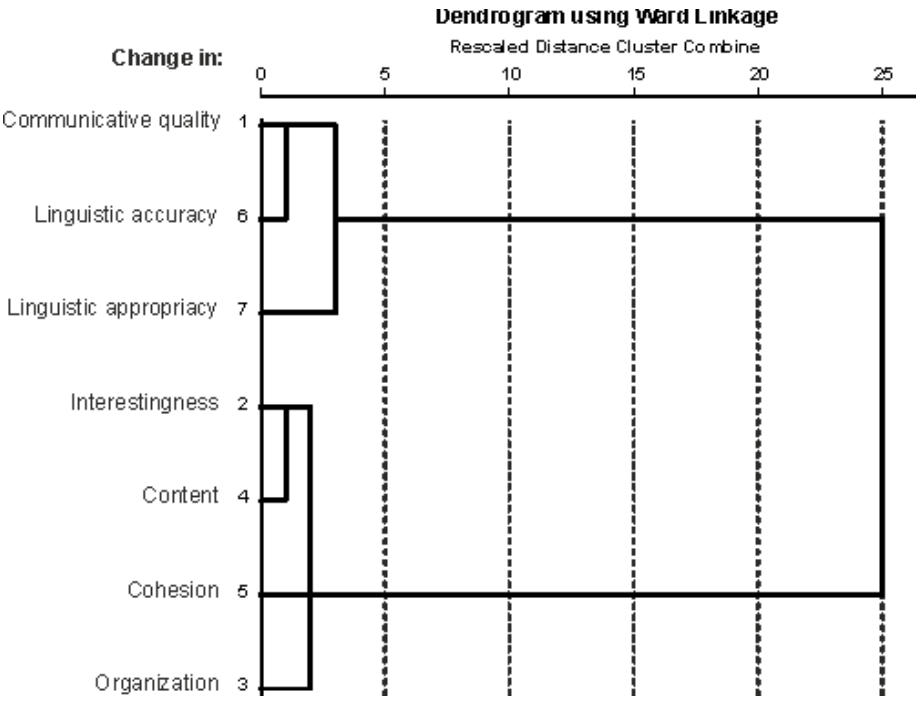
These findings indicate that the process-genre approach had a significant impact on the development of the students' writing competence. The considerable improvement across all competences demonstrated the effectiveness of the instructional intervention in enhancing the production of higher-quality essays in all aspects of writing.

Correlations Between the Change Scores

The change scores correlated highly and significantly, ranging from r = .37 to .75, with no pattern that could be discerned from visual inspection of the correlation matrix. A cluster analysis was calculated using squared Euclidean distances between the competence change scores and Ward linkage agglomeration. The resulting dendogram is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Dendogram of Change Scores



The dendogram suggests two quite clear clusters. One cluster comprised the change scores for Communicative quality, Linguistic accuracy, and Linguistic appropriacy, which we refer to as Linguistic Control Cluster. This cluster reflects the micro-level of language features of writing including accuracy, appropriacy, and clarity of language use. The other cluster comprised the change scores for Interestingness, Organization, Content, and Cohesion, collectively described as Discourse-level Cluster. This cluster represents macro-level aspects of writing qualities contributing to overall structure, logical flow of ideas, and reader engagement in the essay.

These findings support the earlier analysis of differences in change across writing traits. Traits grouped within each cluster were strongly correlated, indicating distinct but interrelated areas of development. The relatively higher improvements in Interestingness, Organization, Content, and Cohesion competences (Discourse-level Cluster) were also a more highly correlated set of changes. The relatively lower improvements in Communicative quality, Linguistic accuracy, and Linguistic appropriacy

(Linguistic Control Cluster) were also a more highly correlated set of changes while being much less associated with the other changes.

Comparability of Pre- and Post-test Essay Scores

While all students were assigned Topic 1 in the pre-test, in the post-test 14 students selected Topic 2, 13 selected Topic 3, and 51 selected Topic 4. A repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance analyzed differences in the post-test mean competence scores according to whether the students chose topic 2, 3, or 4. Mauchly's test of sphericity was significant, and subsequent statistical tests were carried out using the lower bound for Epsilon, reducing treatment degrees of freedom from 6 and 12 to 1 and 2, and error degrees of freedom from 450 to 75. Table 3 provides the summary table.

Table 3

Repeated Measures Multivariate Analysis of Variance Summary Table

Source	Type III SS	df	MS	F	p
Tests of Within-Subjects Effects					
Competence	84.6	1	84.6	78.8	<.001
Competence x Topic	4.4	2	2.2	2.1	.13
Error	80.6	75	2.21		
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Topic	2.4	2	1.2	0.6	.57
Error	155.8	75	2.1		

The interaction effect was not significant. This suggests that any differences in competence scores did not depend upon the particular topic, hence that differences in competence scores were similar for each of the three topics chosen. The Topic effect was not significant, suggesting that competence scores were similar across the three topics. The Competence effect was significant and was similar to the significant Competence effect shown by the change scores in Figure 2 and Table 2. Significantly higher scores were shown by Communicative quality. Interestingness, Organization, Content, and Cohesion, compared to Linguistic accuracy, and Linguistic appropriacy. This finding permitted the pooling of the post-test scores Topics 2, 3, and 4 in comparing them to the pre-test scores in Topic 1.

Interview Analysis Findings

Writing Knowledge Gained After Exposure to Model Texts

The initial stages of instruction were instrumental in building genre knowledge in writing. Building the context raised students' awareness of writing as socially constructed activity. Analyzing model texts helped them understand organizational structure and language choices and interconnectedness of language features and social context. Details of students' development are discussed in the following sections.

Understanding the Writing Context, Content, and Communicative Purposes

During the context-building stage, the students were guided to explore communicative goals for specific writing contexts. Many participants reflected that they gained greater clarity about why they were writing and who their intended audience was. Several students (e.g. S2, S11, S15, S16) explained that understanding the essay's purpose and its intended audience helped them organize the ideas more effectively. For example, S2 stated, "understanding the purpose made it easier to attempt writing." Reading also served as a scaffolding for idea development and text organization. For example, S12 explained that, "If I analyzed it, such as asking why it was written, for what purpose, and by whom, I benefited more".

Understanding How Audience and Social Context Influences Language Use

By examining model texts, students developed an understanding of how the writer-reader relationship and social contexts influenced their writing. They realized that language choices, such as tone, formality, vocabulary, and sentence structures varied depending on communicative purposes and intended audience. S1 emphasized that audience awareness helped them to develop "engaging" ideas and "write to the point", while S14 observed that language use varied depending on whether the text was intended for peers or instructors. Similarly, several students (e.g., S01, S14) highlighted that examples of formal and informal writing helped students recognize appropriate linguistic choices. This suggested that students began to internalize how social expectations influenced linguistic choices, reinforcing the significance of social context influencing both rhetorical level and language choices.

Gaining Knowledge of Organizational Structure

Students revealed that analysis of model texts enabled them to identify the overall structural organization of the essay and how different elements of the essay (e.g., introductions, thesis statements, body paragraphs, and conclusions) were structured. Some students emphasized that analysis of each paragraph helped them see how thoughts or meanings were organized in a logical sequence. S23 described this organizational understanding as a "template" that guided their own writing. Knowledge of organizational structure was later applied in the students' independent writing.

Reflections as Guiding Tool and Benefits for Future Applications

During reflection, students consistently reported that reflective tasks—often guided by teacher prompts—served as a metacognitive review of genre knowledge and its utilization in their writing. As S2 stated, reflection helped them to "summarize the knowledge we gained" and it could be applied to further assignments. These reflections helped students to internalize and recognize the transferability of genre knowledge in their writing.

Students also acknowledged the long-term benefits beyond the writing classrooms. For example, S1 noted how essay structures sharpened critical thinking. Meanwhile, S2 highlighted broad skill improvement, from organizing ideas to using accurate grammar. These comments showed that teaching practice established a foundation for further development of writing across various contexts.

Confidence Gained After the Course

Throughout the course, students became more confident in their ability to write academic essays as they gained specific knowledge and skills necessary for their writing. For example, they gained awareness of intended audience and writing purpose as they identified different essay types and their communicative goals (S4). They developed a better understanding of organizational plans for each type of essay and were able to utilize skills to achieve rhetorical demands in their writing (S11, S20). Additionally, they became more mindful of their vocabulary choices and language use, such as formal and informal usage (S8). Finally, they gained more confidence in writing, viewing it as a means of expressing ideas rather than a test of perfect grammar (S1). Such knowledge collectively was crucial for confidence in writing academic essays.

Contribution of Reading to the Development of Writing Competence

Later stages of instruction—collaborative construction and independent writing—allowed students to apply their internalized awareness of social context and genre-specific conventions to the development of their writing competence, as presented in following sections.

Sharing and Utilizing Genre Knowledge in Pre-writing

During the collaborative construction stage, group working allowed them to utilize genre knowledge learned in writing essays. They shared their views on ideas development, content organization, usage of language, and vocabulary. Several students found peer collaboration helpful for ideas development and improving their writing (e.g. S2), while others (e.g. S19, S10) mentioned improvement of language use. S24 remarked that working with peers made the writing sessions more "engaging."

Students employed mind maps to generate ideas and outlines to structure their thoughts prior to drafting. Awareness of the essay's purpose and audience's expectations guided them to present ideas logically. As S14 reflected, mind maps "helped keep our thoughts within a framework". S22 added that such techniques also helped them to "organize our thoughts and prioritize information", while S20 noted these strategies helped avoid "unorganized" essays.

Practice for Individual Writing

Collaborative writing was considered as a practice for independent writing tasks. It could build students' readiness and confidence to write their own essays. Several students (e.g., S11, S16) noted that they gained more confidence after engaging in group activities. Others, such as S4, reported a clearer understanding of organizational structure. The activity also appeared to foster critical thinking (S7) and enabled some students to identify and correct their own mistakes more effectively (S13).

Genre Awareness in Peer Review

Peer review engagements enabled students to adapt good practices and refine their writing. S1 remarked that it allowed them to "adapt good practices or suggest improvements". S24 similarly reflected, "We saw how friends organize their writing and use language. We could adapt good practices or suggest improvements for each other." Students noted improvements in structure and clarity by observing peers' sentence connections (S1) and evaluating their own work for mistakes (S11). As S2 put it, the process made "our work clearer for readers".

Some students raised concerns about peer feedback accuracy. For example, S17 noted conflicting advice on organization, and S2 observed that less proficient peers might offer unreliable grammar suggestions. However, these reflections highlighted students' increasing awareness of genre-specific expectations and critical engagement with peer input.

Discussion

Quantitative and qualitative findings showed that students developed an awareness of task requirements and genre conventions relevant to the academic texts they were expected to produce. Engagement with model texts through guided reading and analysis helped foster a deeper understanding of writing contexts, communicative purposes, and audience expectations. Interview responses further illustrated students' well-developed knowledge of how their arguments should be structured and presented to meet genre-specific expectations. These findings support Chan's (2018) study which emphasized that reading-into-writing processes facilitate the development of task representations and intertextual connections. Moreover, students' increased genre awareness corresponds with Negretti and Kuteeva's (2011) concept of metacognitive genre learning, where learners actively connect reading input with their own writing strategies. These genre awareness developments were evident in the post-test, where students' essays reflected the discussion genre conventions studied in class.

The quantitative findings revealed that the process-genre approach significantly improved the students' writing competence across all seven writing traits, indicating that the approach effectively developed discourse-level features, such as content and organization, and linguistic features, such as linguistic accuracy and appropriacy. The results correspond with previous studies maintaining the comprehensive benefits of process-genre practice (Huang & Zhang, 2020, 2022; Janenoppakarn, 2016; Jarunthawatchai, 2010; Rahimi, 2024; Rahimi & Zhang, 2022).

Given the robustness of the statistically significant improvements in the quantitative data, the most substantial gains were observed in interestingness, organization, content, and cohesion—the components of the Discourse-level Cluster. These traits initially received the lowest pre-test scores. Particularly, organization received the lowest scores; it was likely due to the students' unfamiliarity with the rhetorical conventions of discussion essays. Unlike expository and argumentative essays, discussion essays require a balanced presentation of different viewpoints in the introduction, followed by the writer's stance in the final paragraph (Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Macken-Horarik, 2002). However, the discourse-level traits, particularly

organization, demonstrated the most substantial improvement in the post-test.

The process-genre approach addressed this challenge by exposing students to genre-specific rhetorical structure through model text analysis and explicit scaffolding in the writing process (Feez & Joyce, 1998; White & Arndt, 1991). As also observed in interview data, students reported that reading model texts helped them understand social expectations and organizational conventions, which in turn informed their own process of writing. These findings correspond with previous studies underlining the role of reading in building genre knowledge in academic writing development (Delaney, 2008; Huang & Zhang, 2022; Johns, 1997; Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011; Tardy, 2025; Yoshimura, 2009), improving content development and textual cohesion (Linuwih, 2021). The significant improvements in these discourse-level features underscored the pedagogical value of integrating reading into process-genre instruction. Learners' awareness of genre-specific rhetorical organization enabled them to better express complex ideas in academic writing (Hyland, 2019).

While discourse-level traits improved markedly, gains in linguistic accuracy, linguistic appropriacy, and communicative quality—the components of the Linguistic Control Cluster—were more moderate. This result seemed to correspond with students' interviews, as many expressed persistent difficulties in using appropriate and accurate grammar. This was reflected in students' difficulties in recognizing grammatical mistakes and their concerns about the reliability of peer feedback for grammar improvement, underscoring the ongoing challenges of developing grammatical control.

Although the process-genre approach did not result in marked improvement in linguistic control, it provided a solid foundation for raising students' awareness of grammatical appropriacy and accuracy in academic writing. These insights highlight the need for continued exposure and practice, as the development of grammatical proficiency in academic writing is a gradual process that requires ongoing pedagogical guidance and a more extended timeframe of instruction (Chuenchaichon, 2011; Tatsanajamsuk, 2024). Additional scaffolding support, for example, an integration of technology into instruction and the development of context-specific materials, may further enhance learners' language development through this instructional approach (Peungcharoenkun & Waluyo, 2023; Samaranayake et al., 2025).

The cluster analysis further illustrated the effects of the intervention in contributing to the divergent patterns of writing development. The Discourse-level Cluster benefited significantly from genre-based instruction and reading–writing integration, resulting in substantial gains in

interestingness, content, organization, and cohesion. In contrast, the Linguistic Control Cluster showed more modest improvement, reflecting the ongoing challenge of developing grammatical accuracy and appropriateness. These clusters offer valuable insights into the nature of writing development and emphasize the importance of tailor-made instruction targeting both discourse-level and linguistic areas.

An additional implication of the findings was the potential transferability of writing skills beyond the classroom. Through process-genre instruction with reading guidance, learners developed strategies for analyzing texts, structuring arguments, and selecting appropriate language—skills they reported applying beyond the immediate classroom in future academic writing. As Hirvela (2004) and Grabe and Zhang (2016) suggested, the integration of reading into writing instruction provides learners with analytical skills applicable to dealing with the demands of academic literacy. Similarly, Hyland (2019) emphasized that genre knowledge enables students to write effectively in response to expectations across varied contexts.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

This study demonstrated that systematically connecting reading and writing through a process-genre approach can effectively enhance EFL students' academic writing competence. Quantitative data showed statistically significant improvements across all seven writing traits, with the most notable development in discourse-level features—organization, content, cohesion, and interestingness. These findings were further supported by qualitative data illustrating that students developed genre awareness through scaffolded reading of model texts, collaborative and individual writing activities, and reflective tasks. Although improvements in linguistic accuracy and appropriacy were comparatively moderate, students reported increased confidence and a deeper understanding of writing as purpose-driven acts shaped by readers' expectations and social context.

A notable contribution of this study is its explicit integration of reading as a central pedagogical element in writing development within process-genre instruction, rather than treating reading as supplementary. This integration not only enhanced students' understanding of genre but also contributed to improvements in content development, idea organization, and communicative effectiveness. Students were able to observe how meaning is constructed in context and apply this understanding to their own writing—a pedagogical emphasis of the five-stage teaching–learning cycle implemented in this study, in contrast to prior models where reading was treated as a peripheral act rather than a central component of writing instruction.

These findings offer important implications for teaching foreign language writing. The process-genre approach implemented in this study serves as a practical framework for ELT instructors aiming to develop students' academic writing competence through the integration of reading. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate guided reading of diverse academic genres to support students in building genre knowledge and transferring that awareness across different stages of the writing process.

Ultimately, this study underscores the pedagogical value of integrating reading within process-genre instruction to promote not only academic writing proficiency but also learner engagement and confidence—both essential for the long-term development of academic literacy in EFL contexts.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study focused on a single genre—discussion essay—and was implemented over a limited period of one academic semester. To better understand how reading–writing connections within a process-genre approach contribute to the long-term development of academic writing competence, future research may adopt a longitudinal design to examine how students develop competence across multiple genres over an extended timeframe.

About the Authors

Orathai Chaiya Jarunthawatchai: A lecturer in the Department of English, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science, Kasetsart University, Kamphaeng Saen Campus.

Wisut Jarunthawatchai: An assistant professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science, Kasetsart University, Kamphaeng Saen Campus. His research interests include second language writing and Global Englishes.

Lester Gilbert: An emeritus fellow and associate professor in the Department of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, UK, with over 150 publications mostly centred on the use of computers for educational purposes.

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