



Facilitating the Development of Advanced L2 Academic Writing

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Composing written texts is a cognitively demanding process, even in a writer's L1. Producing academic texts and adhering to genre conventions and reader expectations in an L2 is additionally challenging, even for those who are highly proficient in English. To explore setbacks and ways to facilitate advanced L2 academic writing proficiencies, nine L2-English students pursuing higher education degrees in English-centered programs participated in this pilot study. They completed surveys, interviews, and produced drafts of academic texts for analysis. Participants have L1 backgrounds in Cantonese, Mandarin, Indonesian, Korean and Japanese, and are pursuing undergraduate or graduate-level degrees in various programs. They are expected to produce critical essays, research papers, and theses in order to graduate. Findings from their feedback and analysis of their compositions are evaluated to determine 12 main areas of difficulty, which will serve as the foundation for future studies comparing the effectiveness of different writing methodologies.

学術的な文章を作成するには、それが筆者の第一言語であっても高い認知能力が必要とされる。そうであるならば、L2で学術的な文章を作成し、該当するジャンルの慣例を忠実に守り、読者の期待に応える文章を作成することは、たとえ英語に堪能な学習者であっても困難であろう。高度な L2 アカデミックライティング能力を促進する方法や難点を探るため、英語中心のプログラムで高等教育の学位取得を目指す 9 人の英語をL2とする学生に調査・インタビューに参加してもらい、各自に学術的文章を作成してもらった。当該学生は、広東語、北京語、インドネシア語、韓国語、日本語を第一言語とし、卒業するために評論文、研究論文、学位論文の作成が求められる大学生または大学院生である。学生からのフィードバックおよび文章分析の結果、主に12の分野で困難な要素が見いだされた。本論は学術論文作成における有効な方法論を比較検討するための今後の研究の基礎となる。

Composing academic texts is a cognitively demanding process, which requires focus, time, and considerable effort (Han & Hiver, 2018). Producing academic texts, and adhering to genre conventions and reader expectations in an L2 is additionally challenging, even for those who are highly proficient in English (Huang & Zhang, 2022).

As such, this research paper will endeavor to investigate what difficulties and setbacks continue to challenge even advanced L2 English writers at the undergraduate and graduate level. It will also serve as a pilot study for future research which will seek to identify which teaching methods best supplement these limitations in university settings.

Literature Review

Following the tradition of teaching writing to L1 English speakers in academic settings, three major methodologies have emerged over the last 70 years and fluctuated in popularity and usage, and eventually becoming commonplace for L2 writing instruction (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

The product approach, taking root in principles grounding the audiolingual method, gained popularity in university settings through the 1960s (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). In a product approach setting, students read, analyze, and try to emulate texts from successful writers, which serve as exemplars for them to attempt to reproduce (Badger & White, 2000; Raimes, 1991). Students are expected to notice and imitate rhetorical patterns through focused practice. However, the product approach leaves little room for individuality or for a writer to develop their own sense of voice and does not support students' awareness of how to construct complex written texts other than trying to emulate them (Campbell & Latimer, 2012). Therefore, the next wave of writing instruction segued into the process approach.

The process approach emphasizes a writer's individuality, and the concept that writing is a vehicle to deliver their unique perspectives, thoughts and ideas (Ferris & Hedgcock,

*Miyamoto: Facilitating the Development of Advanced L2 Academic Writing*

2014). With the process approach, students learn that successful writing is accomplished through a series of steps in a recursive process. These include brainstorming, organizing, drafting, and receiving peer and teacher feedback before revising and editing written texts (Badger & White, 2000; Williams, 2003). However, this approach does not focus on the textual discourse differences between various types of writing, which led the way to the following wave in composition pedagogy.

The genre-based approach brings writers' attention to the different types of literary texts, and their differences in language, organization, structure, and other discursive features (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014; Hyland, 2002). Student writers read, analyze, and practice producing different kinds of compositions, adhering to audience expectations and applying language specific to the goals of the text type (Paltridge, 2013), be it persuasive, expository, narrative, or another kind of composition.

These three methodologies each approach the task of writing from different perspectives, highlighting different processes through which writers can engage to produce texts in both L1 and L2 writing instructional contexts.

However, EFL students face additional setbacks and difficulties when trying to compose works in English, especially academic texts. Some of the difficulties they experience can be observed by inter-language differences outlined in contrastive analysis (Connor, 2011; Kaplan, 1966). Contrastive analysis suggests that the unique language structures and writing styles of students' L1s shape their understanding of rhetorical and linguistic structures in the L2. Depending on the differences between languages, these L1 writing conventions can often be incongruous with the traditional literary patterns of the L2. As such, L2 EFL student writers will need additional support deconstructing, analyzing, and applying English-specific rhetorical patterns and adhering to genre-specific literary expectations, in addition to guided practice producing texts (Connor, 2011; Ferris, 2009).

The researcher became interested in studying how academic English writing is taught to EFL learners while pursuing her master's degree in TESOL and working with Japanese L2 English speakers also taking the course. Through working with them on some of their essays, she realized that there were large gaps in their awareness of what the objectives of research papers and academic texts were, how they are generally structured and organized, and what language should be used and when. She learned that most of her Japanese colleagues had never been explicitly taught about major genre-specific and general literary expectations of English academic texts. These colleagues had a high enough command of the language to participate in undergraduate and graduate-level university programs entirely conducted in English; however, their ability to notice

and analyze academic texts, and apply that knowledge to their own compositions, was limited, and the process was labor-intensive and frustrating.

Through this experience, the researcher became interested in exploring ways to support L2 English writers, and started to investigate different teaching methodologies for writing instruction that could be utilized when supporting L2 academic English writers with their compositions. One teaching method gaining popularity recently in teaching L2 writing instruction has come from combining the focal points of both genre-based and process-based approaches, creating the process-genre approach (Huang & Zhang, 2020). With the process-genre approach, L2 student writers have the dynamic, complex process of producing large compositions simplified and paced out through the recursive stages of writing, which supports and scaffolds their learning (Teng, 2022). At the same time, they also receive specific instruction on different literary genres and types of texts, as well as the language and structures that are most effective when producing these texts (Huang & Zhang, 2022).

The complex demands of writing require composers to focus on responding to a prompt, maintaining cohesive tone and formality of language throughout, and organizing ideas in a cohesive manner (Ferris & Eckstein, 2020). At the same time, writers must also clearly state a position and defend it with support, produce a clear introduction and summative conclusion, and carry out several other procedures at once (Ferris & Eckstein, 2020). L2 English writers are tasked with managing all of these factors, while also producing texts in a language they have a more limited command of, all while their understanding of reader expectations, conventions, and writing processes are framed through the lens of their L1's literary conventions.

Several studies focusing on teaching academic writing to highly proficient EFL students have indicated that heightened awareness of genre features and contrasting L1/L2 literary conventions can facilitate students' awareness and ability to produce strong texts, and correlate positively with greater writing proficiency. Negretti and Kuteeva (2011) found Swedish pre-service L2 English teachers' abilities to analyze and produce texts were positively influenced by developing metacognitive knowledge of genre. Wei and Zhang (2020) evaluated differences between Chinese university students' understandings of persuasive essay constructs in their L1, Mandarin, and their L2, English. Their findings suggest that higher levels of awareness of these differences were positively correlated with more successful compositions.

However, few studies have focused on evaluating and identifying limitations and deficiencies that continue to exist in the writing abilities of highly proficient L2 academic English writers. As such, the researcher was interested in investigating what areas



of writing are still difficult even amongst high-level EFL writers who are exposed to ample amounts of academic texts and expected to write frequently at a high degree of proficiency. In addition to compiling a list of problematic areas that still plague advanced writers, the researcher also wanted to evaluate whether popular writing teaching methodologies—namely, the process, genre, and process-genre approaches—address these issues, and use these findings as a framework for a future study comparing the effectiveness of different types of writing instruction in university classroom settings.

Research Questions

In order to further investigate these ideas, the following research questions were established to serve as the foundation for this pilot study, setting the groundwork for further study in investigating advanced L2 academic writing instruction:

- RQ1. What aspects of writing do advanced L2 English writers struggle with when producing academic texts for their tertiary English programs?
- RQ2. Are these issues addressed and supplemented by the process, genre, and process-genre approaches to writing instruction?

Participants

Nine L2-English speaker students pursuing higher education degrees in English-centered programs at universities in Japan agreed to participate in this study. These students are originally from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Korea, and Japan, with L1 backgrounds including Cantonese, Mandarin, Indonesian, Korean, and Japanese. They are currently pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees at three different universities in western Japan. They are studying in various programs, including business administration, education, liberal arts, and anthropology, and need to engage with and write critical essays and academic research papers. Some must also produce a thesis in order to graduate.

Each of these students have a strong enough language command to pursue higher education in programs where their coursework is conducted entirely in English. However, they reported having varying levels of comfortability and self-perceived success in writing in English for their programs.

This pilot study involved nine participants in order to focus on interviews and individual writing workshops regarding their compositions. This would allow a more qualitative understanding of the nuanced and complex difficulties participants

experience when writing in English. In future studies, it will be necessary to include a larger number of participants in order to more widely justify potential findings.

Methodology

This study was designed to replicate aspects of Ferris and Eckstein's (2020) study evaluating the abilities, setbacks and needs of 12 L1 and L2 university writers through a series of surveys, interviews, and the collection of written draft assignments, which were corrected and analyzed before feedback was offered. Implementing this type of case study design was chosen in order to “probe more deeply into individual students' backgrounds, experiences, attitudes, and feelings than would be feasible in a psychometric or primarily quantitative design” (p. 306). As such, a mixed methods approach was utilized to investigate the research questions noted above. Participants consented to engage in a series of surveys and interviews to discuss what elements of writing are most difficult, what areas of their assignments they receive the most critical feedback on, and what they would like additional instruction on to improve their writing.

In research and classroom contexts, errors in written output are often separated into three general categories: content, organization, and language (Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2012). However, many studies aiming to chart and analyze error categories focus on more salient, easily-definable grammatical or linguistic errors, like run-on sentences and spelling (Ferris, 2006); the use of articles (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009b; Shintani & Ellis, 2015); particular verb tenses (Sheen et al., 2009) and pronoun agreement (Diab, 2015), and tend to focus on lower- or intermediate-level language users.

The areas of difficulty that still exist for high-level L2 English writers are wider and more complex, as their success is dependent on their ability to make “informed and affective linguistic choices” regarding “a wide range of linguistic (and extralinguistic) features” while also considering the task, audience, rhetorical effect, level of formality, and the content within the writing itself (Ferris & Eckstein, 2020, p. 302). Managing all of these skills and subskills at once is a cognitively demanding and dynamic process in an L2, and, as students' abilities and linguistic backgrounds are diverse, the type and scope of errors can vary widely (Ferris & Eckstein, 2020). As such, a list of content, organization, and language-based errors were compiled and revised over several iterations to reflect the types of errors present in the students' writing assignments.

Students submitted drafts of their assignments they were completing for their courses, which were read and analyzed for areas of weakness and potential support by the researcher. These then became the topics of conversation during workshops, as



having errors in one's written output directly pointed out and being able to discuss it has been shown to be effective for enhancing the process of noticing and facilitating the understanding the root causes of error (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010a; Bitchener et al., 2005; Bonilla et al., 2021; Sheen, 2007).

Writing workshops focused on participants' organization, voice, adherence to genre expectations, grammar, and other writing conventions to get a sense of their abilities and struggles, as well as gauge their expectations and experiences receiving writing feedback. Students would submit their drafts before a scheduled workshop, and the researcher would read, analyze, and correct them before meeting. During workshops, which were held either in person or over Zoom, the researcher would discuss these errors with the participant, pointing out concerns and asking about their thought processes and what they were trying to convey. Information shared during workshops, as well as examples of different types of errors found in student writing were identified and noted for later analysis. Constructive feedback was then offered to direct their attention to the errors and facilitate discussion (Bonilla et al., 2021), and the researcher and participant would collaboratively make corrections to the draft.

Participants were taking part in the study by submitting drafts of real assignments for their coursework in different programs and universities, and therefore the amount and type of compositions they submitted for analysis varied. During the course of this study, some participants submitted up to four essay assignments, while others only submitted one. As such, the quantity of different types of errors occurring across the nine participants was not coded for frequency during this pilot study, as findings would be misleading. While future studies will focus on a specific group of students completing similar assignments in order to generate more applicable and justifiable findings, this pilot study was structured in this way in order to look more deeply at the wide range of issues that occur when advanced L2 English writers produce different types of academic texts in different settings.

Multiple iterations of adding to, consolidating, and reviewing the qualitative information gathered from workshops, draft corrections, and interview feedback were conducted to interpret the findings (Kekeya, 2016). Ultimately, a finalized list of 12 types of problematic areas that advanced L2 writers face was generated. Table 1 outlines these error categories below.

Table 1
Types of Errors Made by Advanced L2 Academic Writers

Error category	Error type
Content	Negotiating different writing styles depending on the task objective
Content	Knowing how to edit and revise drafts after receiving feedback
Content	Maintaining a consistent voice and tone
Content	Effectively developing ideas while being concise
Content	Accurately using citations to justify claims
Content	Taking a definitive position, expressing opinions while balancing pragmatics
Content, Organization	Applying text-appropriate structures
Content, Organization	Organizing content in a logical, linear progression
Content, Organization	Meeting audience expectations for content, tone, and text organization
Content, Organization	Understanding, navigating potential cultural differences between audience and writer
Organization	Connecting ideas effectively
Language	Knowing and implementing proper vocabulary

To provide additional context of in-text instances of these different types of composition errors, Table 2 outlines a selection of examples of different content, organization, and language-related errors found during the editing and workshopping process, which will be analyzed further.



Table 2
Examples of Student Errors from Text Samples

Error category	Error type	Error in context	Sample from student text
Content	Accurately using citations to justify claims	Citation was intended to support the rationale, but no supplemental information provided to explain it	"I used an analytic rubric (Brown & Lee, 2015)."
Organization	Understanding, navigating potential cultural differences between audience and writer	Disconnect between English persuasive essay reader expectations and delivery	Student added new, previously unmentioned information to support their argument during conclusion of persuasive essay
Language	Knowing and implementing proper vocabulary	Inserting personal opinion/bias	"...Korea has become a living hell"
		Hyperbolic language	After the war, "the country was nothing but ashes and ruins"

Findings

In analyzing the list of areas of difficulty and examples of errors generated from participants' drafts and from feedback during interviews and surveys, it was noted that the factors could generally be separated into two distinct types of issues. The first are those addressed and supplemented in process-based teaching approaches, and the

second are those addressed and supplemented in genre-based teaching approaches. The areas of difficulty that fall into aspects of writing instruction focused on during process-based and genre-based approaches are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3
Which Errors Are Addressed by Different Writing Instruction Approaches

Writing Instruction Type	Error Type
Process approach	Organizing content in a logical, linear progression
Process approach	Knowing how to edit and revise drafts after receiving feedback
Process approach	Connecting ideas effectively
Process approach	Maintaining a consistent voice and tone
Genre approach	Meeting audience expectations for content, tone, and text organization
Genre approach	Understanding, navigating potential cultural differences between audience and writer
Genre approach	Applying text-appropriate structures
Genre approach	Negotiating different writing styles
Genre approach	Taking a definitive position, expressing opinions clearly while balancing pragmatics
Genre approach	Effectively developing ideas while being concise
Genre approach	Knowing and implementing appropriate vocabulary
Genre approach	Accurately using citations to justify claims

These issues do not occur in isolation independently but are interwoven and occur at varying degrees of notability. Several instances where participants' writing showed areas of needing improvement could be characterized as deficiencies caused by a combination of genre and process-based approach concerns.



Content-based Errors

One of the noteworthy difficulties for the participants seemed to be understanding the purposes, structures, and objectives of different elements in academic texts. For example, during a one-on-one writing workshop, one graduate student participant, who has been studying for over two years in a Master of Education program and been exposed to upwards of 100 research papers, indicated that she was unsure of the purpose of a literature review. Even though she has read many examples and had to produce several of her own, she didn't understand what a literature review was and why it was written, and therefore struggled in generating it effectively. Through analyzing example reading texts, the participant assumed she was meant to introduce previous research relating to her topic. However, she could not articulate that literature reviews also serve to review work on the topic up until that point, to indicate general beliefs or findings about topics that their research would explore, and to introduce a gap in existing knowledge that necessitates that research, leaving opportunity for the writer to introduce their findings and, in effect, provide a service to the research community.

After understanding the purpose of a literature review, the participant was able to analyze her previous work critically, noting that she had a better understanding of why her drafts received negative feedback from instructors, and why their comments asked her to make specific changes. By having an explicit explanation of the structure, objectives, and organization of literature reviews, this participant was able to strengthen her ability to analyze and produce her own texts. Her awareness of how to apply this knowledge to their own work, while not perfect thereafter, showed positive improvement.

Another difficulty that participants tended to exhibit was effectively summarizing the ideas of others, including them into the body of their work, and using appropriate in-text citations. One participant would introduce statistics and information in her essays without providing any justification for where the information came from, simply as if they were known facts. And while other participants understood that they needed to credit the sources of their information, they still struggled with adequately representing the original works and incorporating them into their texts to serve as credible support to their claims. For example, one participant wrote in a research paper draft: "I used an analytic rubric (Brown & Lee, 2015)." When written this way, this sentence could be interpreted as the writer indicating that the cited authors are the original or credited creators of analytic rubrics in a text published in 2015. However, after inquiring, the participant indicated that Brown and Lee did not create the rubric, but rather suggest it is the most effective way of grading students fairly, allowing room for praising their

successes while also giving clear, specific feedback on areas that can be improved. The participant knew that her source provided ample justification for the benefits of analytic rubrics; however, she did not make any of those arguments clear for the reader and did not include the necessary information required to draw the connection.

Another example of incorporating references without a clear explanation or justification can be seen in this quotation taken from a participant's essay: "Students were given a choice in topic (Nation & MacAlister, 2021)." When asked to explain the citation, the participant indicated that Nation and MacAlister promote the concept of providing students with choices in their learning, arguing that it increases interest, motivation, and engagement in the task, thus justifying her decision to provide autonomy. The original way that the information and citation were presented did not convey any of these justifications, which strengthened the participant's argument and added context and dimension to the decision. Instead, it was vague and could have been interpreted a few different ways by the reader, including that this is an original concept of the researchers.

Through focused practice in summarizing reference texts and articulating why certain references were important to their claims, participants were more clearly able to justify their positions using credible sources. By allowing research to defend their arguments and elevate their work, they were better able to maintain a professional, objective tone necessary for academic writing.

Organization-based Errors

Another difficulty that was observed through analyzing participants' compositions was the process of organizing ideas in a clear manner that flow logically and meet reader expectations. Some participants would introduce new information in their conclusion sections to "strengthen their argument," and others struggled to take a clear stance on their position, providing evidence that did not clearly support any claims made.

Introducing new information in the conclusion of a paper could be explained through the findings of contrastive analysis, which asserts that literature in Asian languages has a tendency to not clearly state a position until the end of a paper, inductively guiding the reader from more general to more specific ideas until the conclusion, where the author's intentions and ideas are ultimately expressed (Connor, 2011; Kaplan, 1966). By adding additional information into the conclusion, the participant stated she wanted to make a strong concluding argument, leaving the reader with a favorable impression of her position, as is commonly found in literary texts written in Asian languages. However, in

*Miyamoto: Facilitating the Development of Advanced L2 Academic Writing*

English, a conclusion consists of a review of ideas previously stated. During workshops, participants had a chance to analyze research papers and publications to observe what elements are included in conclusion sections of academic texts. After explicit instruction and opportunities to evaluate examples, the participant who added new information into her conclusion indicated a higher level of awareness of the expectations of English essays, and was better able to summarize and review her content in subsequent drafts.

The participants who tended to avoid clearly taking a side or stating their position in their essays indicated feeling that they lack competence balancing pragmatics when writing academic texts. During an interview, one participant noted feeling uncomfortable taking a position, and attacking counterclaims, because she believed they would be perceived as rude or unprofessional by their readers. The heightened difficulty of maintaining a strong academic voice while also not wanting to be interpreted as impolite made students feel uncomfortable or unwilling to clearly state a position and defend it. They admitted to hiding behind vague, indirect statements and claims, leaving interpretation open to the reader in the hopes that generalizations would be more effective than explicitly choosing a side.

However, when writing persuasive essays, expressing opinions, and making justifications, the ability to clearly state a position, support it with evidence, and defend it against counter arguments is an important skill when composing in English. As such, the participants needed specific, focused practice writing thesis statements, articulating their position, and rebutting opposing viewpoints with wording that was objective and pragmatic. While this practice will be a continuous process that probably will not come to completion, participants did indicate feeling more confident and comfortable after practicing repeatedly.

Language-based Errors

One participant struggled with maintaining a neutral position and not including his personal views when writing his thesis on 21st century Korean social dynamics. The paper claimed to be an “unbiased and cold analysis” of social and political factors leading to present-day sociocultural issues in South Korea, and the participant wrote he does “not side with anyone’s opinion.” However, it was full of hyperbolic language (e.g. “the country was nothing but ashes and ruins” after the Korean war) and language that clearly indicates a personal bias in favor of one particular side (e.g. “South Korea has ended up with a society in which the glass ceiling is too apparent” and “Even if one works hard, it is nearly impossible to succeed the way one could several years ago.”)

This dramatic use of language and the inclusion of personal beliefs into what was meant to be a critical analysis diminishes the credibility of the content and weakens the quality of the writing. During workshops, the participant and researcher focused on ways to remove the writer’s presence in the text by incorporating more sources and in-text citations to justify statements, instead of relying on generalizations or unsubstantiated claims. Time was spent focusing on ways to change the tone and voice of the piece to be a more neutral overview of the important topics, without the inclusion of personal opinion or biased language, in order to meet audience expectations of a research paper’s language and organization. After providing feedback that certain areas of the text were too opinionated or overly inflated, the participant was tasked with combing through his text and identifying sentences that might be problematic. Once he had identified these areas, he was asked what ideas he wanted to impart to the reader, and ways to introduce those ideas in a more formal and neutral tone and voice were discussed. Through repeated chances to search for, identify, and try to positively adjust blanket or biased statements and dramatic language, this participant was better able to notice and self-correct when he was editing his research paper in subsequent workshops.

Discussion

Through surveys, interviews, and individual writing workshops, the nine participants of this study demonstrated a wide knowledge of how to write academic texts in their L2, while also exhibiting areas of difficulty that cause them frustration and confusion when trying to compose high-level texts for their university programs. In regards to RQ1, advanced L2 academic English writers displayed and expressed still experiencing difficulties with 12 different aspects of writing, despite their advanced level. These include a variety of content, organization, and language-oriented issues.

When observing these areas of difficulty outlined by findings of RQ1, they tended to fall into two categories, characterized by concepts and ideas that are studied and practiced in process-based or genre-based writing approaches. These difficulties are complex and dynamic, and require consciousness-raising explicit instruction, repeated practice, and constructive feedback to supplement their learning. Often, the problematic areas for high-level EFL writers involve combined elements of both process- and genre-based concerns. As such, in regards to RQ2, the argument can be made that different areas of writing difficulties are addressed by the process, genre, and process-genre approaches respectively. Since issues tend to occur either because of a lack of awareness of or ability to apply genre or literary conventions, or from setbacks that occur while working through the recursive stages of writing, it could be argued that all three

*Miyamoto: Facilitating the Development of Advanced L2 Academic Writing*

pedagogical approaches will, to some degree, address and support problematic areas in student writing.

However, the extent to which each approach addresses these areas of difficulty, and which would be more effective to support advanced L2 academic writers, cannot be accounted for within the scope of this pilot study. Future studies will include more specific parameters and a direct comparison between the types of teaching methodologies to determine which, if any, is more effective at addressing the areas of difficulty compiled in this pilot study. Since the participants in the current pilot study received a combination of process- and genre-specific feedback and practice during individual workshopping opportunities, and the sample size is small, a valid comparison cannot be justified at this time.

Through feedback during workshops and deliberate focus on genre elements and practice going through the process of drafting compositions, the nine participants demonstrated growth in their awareness of different text types, literary conventions, and audience expectations. They were then able to apply this knowledge to their writing with greater success over the course of the treatment.

Through explicit instruction and analysis of elements of a literature review, and other sections of research papers, one participant was able to demonstrate a heightened awareness of genre conventions, type of language expected, and how ideas are conveyed and organized for maximum effect in research papers. Another was able to better identify and eliminate overly descriptive and biased language that violates reader expectations and is uncharacteristic of a research paper, after repeated practice noticing and correcting his own errors. Others improved their ability to incorporate sources and properly cite them to express their intended meaning. Other participants improved their understanding of how to take a clear position when writing a persuasive essay and support it with evidence, without feeling like the reader will find them impolite.

By practicing the recursive steps of planning, drafting, reviewing and editing as outlined by the process approach, the participants were able to develop more confidence and writing skill by applying this learned genre awareness to their own work, and with constructive feedback, improve their abilities to compose effective literature reviews and research papers.

Studying and practice in applying genre conventions and the recursive stages of writing during the treatment facilitated in the participants' developing abilities to address the complex obstacles they face each time they write. These included how

and why they should organize their ideas, choose specific language, and present their position to maximize the effectiveness of their writing, in order to reach their intended audience. The participants demonstrated that through heightened awareness of genre conventions and literary expectations of different text types, combined with repeated practice of the recursive steps of the stages of writing, their command of writing showed small, but positive, improvement. They also reported feeling more confident, indicating they had a better understanding of what was expected of them when they wrote academic papers after the course of the study. With that being said, additional research is necessary to qualify the effectiveness of different methodologies of teaching writing to be able to justify the degree to which process, genre, or process-genre approaches to teaching writing are able to support student writers and address the 12 areas of difficulty identified in this study.

Limitations

This pilot study endeavored to identify problematic areas for advanced L2 writers of academic English, in order to serve as a basis for future studies on the effectiveness of different writing instruction methodologies. While 12 general areas of difficulty were identified after surveys, interviews, and one-on-one workshops with participants to give feedback and edit their work, the small *N* size (9) of this pilot study limits the scope and applicability of these findings across different contexts and student populations. Future iterations will need to include a larger number of participants to further justify the findings. Participants also did not supply a standardized English level ranking or certification, such as a CEFR or TOEIC score, to reflect their language proficiency. Having been accepted into and participating in a fully English-centered undergraduate or graduate program with English as an L2 was their only qualification. In future iterations of this research, more specific measures could be taken to provide additional information and quantify student abilities to indicate clearer results. Including a larger participant pool could also facilitate more generalizable findings and offer deeper insight into ways to support and nurture advanced L2 English writers.

In addition, the improvements noted from workshopping with participants were not quantified by any test scores or specific assignments, but rather noted and relayed by the researcher qualitatively. Future iterations could endeavor to more clearly monitor improvements through stricter, quantitative measures like pre- and post-test writing exercises.



Conclusion

Although writing in an L2 can be a complex and demanding endeavor, a heightened awareness of genre and literary conventions combined with repeated practice of the different stages of writing can be effective in facilitating the development of advanced L2 academic writers. This pilot study identified 12 areas of difficulty that advanced, university-level academic writers of English continue to face, despite their high proficiency in the language. With these areas identified, future studies will endeavor to explore which, and to what degree, teaching methodologies are effective for supplementing these areas in a university writing classroom setting.

Bio Data

Shannon Miyamoto is a full-time lecturer at Kwansei Gakuin University in the Language Center. She is interested in academic and creative writing education and research.

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Miyamoto: *Facilitating the Development of Advanced L2 Academic Writing*

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