

# Enhancing Argumentative Essay Writing Skills Among EFL Students at Nguyen Tat Thanh University in Ho Chi Minh City

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**Abstract:** Numerous studies have demonstrated the advantageous aspects of writing in a range of contexts by employing a genre-based methodology. On the other hand, actual evidence about its impact on Vietnamese EFL students is insufficient. This article presents the findings of a field experiment that examined the impact of a genre-based strategy on learners' capability to produce argumentative essays. The study included twenty EFL students from Nguyen Tat Thanh University in Ho Chi Minh city. These students were split up into two groups, and these groups were given different times to learn how to write argumentative essays using the genre-based technique. Three tests were created to evaluate the students' writing abilities: a pre-test, a progress test, and a post-test. Furthermore, interviews that are semi-structured were conducted to ascertain the participants' opinions regarding the genre-based methodology. The results revealed significant improvements in writing performance for both groups following the intervention. Furthermore, feedback from the interviews indicated that the participants viewed the genre-based approach positively, recognizing its value in enhancing their argumentative writing skills.

**Keywords:** writing, experimental study, genre-based approach, argumentative writing, participants' perspectives.

## 1. Introduction

In Vietnam, the significance of English proficiency has surged due to its increasing importance in higher education, employment, business, and studying abroad. Proficiency in English is now a common requirement for most job positions, and career advancement often depends on it (Nunan, 2003). Given the critical role English plays in personal and professional spheres, there is a growing trend towards pursuing international English certifications. Among the four language skills assessed in standardized tests, writing is particularly emphasized for evaluating English proficiency, particularly in academic contexts (White, 1987). Nevertheless, recent results from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) indicate that Vietnamese test-takers struggle the most with writing. This challenge can be attributed to the generally low quality of English language instruction in Vietnam (Hoang, 2015), with specific difficulties in teaching EFL writing (Nguyen, 2019). To address the issues related to teaching writing, especially

argumentative essays, it is essential to explore contemporary teaching methodologies, the responsibilities of both teachers and students, and the influence of Vietnamese culture and assessment practices on EFL writing performance.

## 2. Literature Review

### A. Contemporary Methods for Teaching EFL Writing in Vietnam

In Vietnam, academic writing classes often involve teachers providing students with a topic and a corresponding model text. The primary focus tends to be on dissecting grammatical structures from the model, with little emphasis on content development or understanding the communicative purpose and target audience. As a result, instruction tends to prioritize language form over substantive content. Students are usually not guided in employing writing strategies or engaging with the writing process for their own compositions. This approach frequently hampers students' ability to create original texts unless the topic closely mirrors the provided model. Many students focus mainly on avoiding grammatical mistakes, neglecting the communicative aspects of their writing. When faced with the task of writing argumentative essays, students often struggle due to a lack of knowledge about content creation and writing techniques, leading to work that largely replicates the model text and remains restricted to similar topics.

### B. The Roles of Teachers and Students in EFL Writing Classes

In numerous classes of writing in Vietnam's southern region, the teacher often assumes a central role, with interactions predominantly flowing from the teacher to the students. This approach generally features the teacher presenting information while students passively receive and reproduce it, offering few chances for collaborative or group activities. As a result, it often creates a passive learning environment. Teacher generally does not introduce discovery tasks that would encourage student engagement or facilitate the integration of various language skills in classroom activities. Consequently, students often end up recreating texts based on the provided examples, producing work that closely resembles the topics and formats they have

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been shown.

### *C. Vietnamese Culture's Impact on Students' Writing Skills in Argumentative Essays*

Cultural influences in the context of EFL writing education might pose unique obstacles for students (Grabe and Kaplan, 1999). To write good English argumentative essays, authors must take a stand, anticipate and address the audience's perspective, effectively communicate their position, evaluate alternate viewpoints, and challenge opposing arguments (Driver, Newton, & Osborne, 2000). This approach can be particularly problematic for people from Asian cultures, where Confucian ideals frequently emphasise consensus, respect for public opinion, and community peace (Hinkel, 2002). These cultural norms differ from Western argumentation methods, which highlight individual claims, aggressiveness, and critical response. Wu and Rubin (2000) argue that cultural value systems influence argumentative writing styles. For example, in China, collectivist principles cause learners to prioritise compromise over confrontation, but North Americans, who have a more individualistic orientation, are more likely to establish and question positions. Similarly, Vietnamese students, who have been affected by Confucianism for over two millennia, prefer to write in a more conciliatory tone, reflecting a cultural emphasis on civility and respect. The Confucian principle of *lễ* emphasises respect for hierarchical relationships, resulting in careful and indirect speech, especially when addressing superiors. As a result, Vietnamese students frequently avoid direct confrontation in their argumentative writing, producing essays with less persuasive impact than more straightforward arguments.

### *D. Evaluating Students' Writing Proficiency*

In Vietnam, many EFL teachers tend to emphasize grammatical accuracy over the communicative effectiveness of student writing, even when grammatical errors do not obstruct the overall meaning. Consequently, students who make grammatical mistakes often receive lower grades despite having well-developed ideas, while those who avoid errors might achieve higher scores, regardless of their writing's communicative quality. This focus on grammar can lead students to prioritize grammatical correctness in their writing, aiming for better scores rather than improving their ability to convey ideas effectively. However, this approach can be limiting, as effective writing encompasses more than just grammatical accuracy (Truscott, 1996).

For English teachers in Vietnam, teaching students the way to write argumentative essays is a significant challenge. To overcome this, teachers must provide students with essential skills and knowledge, such as understanding writing mechanics, mastering language usage, understanding appropriate writing procedures and being aware of the context and subject matter of different styles of writing (Tribble, 1996). According to Swales (1990) and Martin (1984), Genres are events of communication, and in order for students to produce well-structured texts, they must be conversant with a variety of genres, including reports, expositions, explanations, and

arguments (Knapp & Watkins, 1994).

The genre-based method has become a helpful tool for enhancing writing training since the beginning of the 1980s. This method is based on Vygotsky's (1978) conception of the sphere of proximal advancement, which contends that students gain from meaningful interactions with teachers and peers and views writing as a social practice (Hyon, 1996; Hammond & Derewianka, 2001). Focussing on three primary elements—field, or the text's social objective; tenor, or the association among those who participated; and the mode, or the communication medium—the genre-based approach emphasises the significance of comprehending the historical and cultural settings of writing (Derewianka (1990); Hammond & Derewianka (2001); Hyon (1996); Kern (2016) ; Thompson (2000); Xin (2001).

By addressing both the contextual and content aspects of writing (Tribble, 1996), it is thought that the genre-based method significantly boosts the argumentative essay writing teaching and learning process. The research seeks to examine how genre-based instruction influences Vietnamese EFL learners' skills in writing argumentative essays and to assess their perceptions of the approach's effectiveness in this educational context.

### *E. Applying the Genre-Based Method to Instruction in Argumentative Essays*

#### *1) Features of Effective Argumentative Writing*

Seyler (2008) proposes five essential components of an argument: aim, arguable topics, evidence, audience, and acknowledgement of the topic's complexity. These parts are designed to assist students comprehend the essence of making a persuasive argument and will enable them to write high-quality texts. Familiarity with these elements assists learners in constructing effective arguments tailored to their audience. As Brannan (2006) notes, by sharing their opinions and worries, figuring out what readers need to know, and acting as though they are a part of the audience themselves, writers can establish a connection with them. Writers must also take a clear stance on a debatable issue and persuade their audience through logical reasoning and evidence (Wiener & Eisenberg, 1987). Besides engaging readers with a well-defined purpose, understanding the audience's characteristics is essential for presenting compelling evidence, as "an argument that fails to persuade its audience is ultimately ineffective" (Lannon, 2003). Additionally, recognizing the complexity of an argument helps writers appreciate that multiple valid perspectives can contribute to a meaningful and impactful argument.

These five elements of a strong argument are valuable for learners in developing effective argumentative writing. According to Miller (2005), using a genre-based method to writing instruction has been shown to be effective in assisting students in overcoming writing obstacles. Consequently, this study employs the genre-based approach to assist learners in mastering and applying the essential characteristics of argumentative essays.

## 2) *The Genre-based Approach's Benefits for Students Writing Argumentative Essays*

Writing can be difficult for EFL and ESL students since they don't fully understand text structure and the demands of various text formats (Ballard & Clanchy, 1993; Kern, 2000). By assisting students in comprehending the composition and function of diverse text genres, examining their characteristics, and utilising these components in their own writing, the genre-based approach to writing teaching tackles these problems.

The genre-based method is defined as "a framework for language instruction" (Byram, 2004). It follows the learning and instruction process proposed by Hammond, Burns, Brosnan, and Gerot (1992). There are four phases in this cycle, and each one has a specific function in the writing process. In the first stage, referred to as "building knowledge of the field," students are tasked with speaking, listening, reading, and taking notes in order to enhance their comprehension of the subject matter. In the second stage of text modelling, students can investigate the goal, organisation, and linguistic elements of the text they will write. In the third stage of cooperative construction of text, students work with the teacher in pairs to improve their writing abilities via supervised practice. In the last stage, known as "independent construction of text," students write their own texts or collaborate in groups without the teacher's guidance (Derewianka, 1990).

By participating in these stages, learners gain insight into the writing process and develop strategies for effective writing. This approach fosters greater proficiency and independence in writing as learners analyze text structures and make informed linguistic choices.

The effect of genre-based teaching on writing argumentative essays has been the subject multiple research. Studies on the effects of genre-based approaches on reports, letters, and recounts have been done by Flowerdew (2000), Krisnachinda (2006), Malakul and Bowering (2006), Swami (2008), Zare-ee (2008), Ahn (2011), and Luu (2011). These studies show how successful genre-based writing instruction is in improving students' writing abilities, showing that this strategy not only raises the calibre of essays but also deepens their comprehension of academic writing.

Specifically, studies focused on argumentative writing, like the works of Kongpetch (2003), Udomyamokkul (2004), Ferreira (2007), and Promwinai (2010), that students improved their command of language usage, logical argumentation, thesis development, and language use. For instance, Kongpetch (2013) studied the impact of the genre-based method on expository essays and students' attitudes over a period of 14 weeks with 45 English majors at Thailand's Khon Kaen University. The findings indicated that genre-based instruction significantly improved learners' control over generic structures and language features in their writing. Additionally, most participants reported a positive reception to the genre-based approach, noting that it facilitated systematic writing and adherence to English conventions.

In a different study, Udomyamokkul (2004) compared the genre-based approach with the process approach in helping learners develop argumentative essays. This 12-week

experimental study involved 55 students from Suranaree University of Technology in Thailand. Results showed that the group using the genre-based approach achieved higher scores in crafting claims and rebuttals compared to the control group, although both groups demonstrated similar overall performance in their final drafts.

These studies collectively underscore the value of genre-based instruction in improving academic writing skills, particularly in crafting well-organized and logically sound argumentative essays.

Ferreira (2007) investigated the impact of the genre-based strategy on the argumentative writing of first-year ESL students at a university in the region of North America. The study showed significant gains in students' writing abilities, particularly in organisation, argumentation, as well as thesis development, even after a short two-week teaching time.

Promwinai (2010) examined the use of ideational, interpersonal, and textual resources by a low-rated and a mid-rated writer to address the field, tenor, and mode hypothetical features of argumentative writings. The study, which took place over a 15-week period in Australia and involved two Thai students enrolled in an English for purposes of academia course, showed that both writers, independent of their starting English level, were able to effectively control the generic framework of their argumentative essays.

The literature emphasizes that using a genre-based approach significantly enhances academic writing outcomes. It has been successfully applied to various types of writing, including recounts, letters, scientific reports, and argumentative essays, across diverse educational contexts and proficiency levels. Despite the varying lengths of instructional periods, the genre-based approach effectively enhances students' understanding of text features and registers (field, tenor, and mode). However, there is a notable gap in research concerning specific elements of argumentative essays, such as awareness of the audience, clarity of purpose, content development, organization, and language usage, particularly within the Vietnamese context.

In regions like the central of Vietnam, where writing pedagogy lags behind recent advancements, there is limited research on the genre-based approach in academic writing, specifically argumentative essays. An experimental study on genre-based instruction could offer valuable insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators on effective writing pedagogies. This study aims to assess the effect of the genre-based approach on students' ability to write argumentative essays and to gather participants' views on this instructional method. The research focuses on answering the following questions:

1. What impact does the genre-based approach have on students' writing of argumentative essays?
2. How do participants view the genre-based approach for teaching and learning argumentative essay writing?

## 3. Method

### A. Design

To assess how the genre-based approach influences students'

Table 1

Group	Pre-test	Intervention	Progress Test	Intervention	Post-test
1	x	Genre-based	x	Process-based	x
2	x	Process-based	x	Genre-based	x

argumentative essay writing abilities, a mixed-methods study which utilises qualitative and quantitative techniques was created. Students' writing performance was the dependent variable, and the approach based on genre was the independent variable. A randomised changing duplicates strategy was used in the study, which, according to Stockburger (1996), is effective in yielding "significant and real effects" by minimizing individual variability that could otherwise distort the results. Table 1 presents the randomized switching replications design employed in this study.

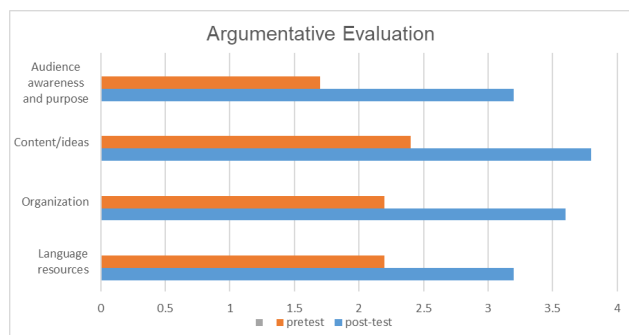


Fig. 1. Mean scores for group 1 on the pretest and posttest deep features

According to Figure 1, the study employed a combined pre-post treatment-control design, involving a replication of the treatment across different phases. During Phase 1, Group 1 received the genre-based treatment, while Group 2 was exposed to the same treatment in Phase 2. At the Nguyen Tat Thanh University where this study was conducted, Group 2 employed the process-based approach in Phase 1, which is the current writing instruction methodology. Conversely, Group 1 engaged with the process-based approach during Phase 2. This approach, used in writing lessons, encompasses stages such as idea generation, idea organization, drafting, and text editing.

### B. Participants

A cohort of twenty second-year EFL students from a university in Ho Chi Minh city participated in this study. The group was divided into two subgroups and included 12 females and 8 males, all aged between 19 and 21. These students had completed a TOEFL PBT course with a score of about 450 and were enrolled in a subsequent course aimed at achieving a score of 550 to fulfill program requirements. The students were engaged in the intervention program, during which they completed a pre-test, progress test, and post-test. Additionally, in semi-structured interviews, twelve students took part. To choose participants for interviews, two students from each group with the highest post-test results, two with average results, and two with the lowest results were categorised as high, average, and low condition participants, respectively.

### C. Materials

Based on the genre-based methodology, the researcher created a set of six two-hour writing sessions for this

investigation. Feez (1998) provided guidance for the instructional design of these sessions based on his genre-based structure. The researcher developed each lesson in accordance with the four phases of the genre-based methodology.

Understanding the substance and language of argumentative texts used as models was the main goal of the first stage, which was called "building field knowledge." Activities included brainstorming, viewing videos, interpreting images, and group presentations, all aimed at fostering a shared understanding of ideas and cultural context necessary for writing. This preparatory phase was essential for setting up the subsequent stage, which involved text modeling (Rothery, 2006).

Modeling, as Long and Richards (1987) noted, often provides crucial guidance even when writing in one's native language. During this phase, students analyzed model argumentative essays to identify their purpose, structural elements, and linguistic features. The instructor guided this analysis through targeted questions and discovery tasks, and provided a glossary of terms related to argumentative writing to enhance students' comprehension of the genre's language features. Effective modeling requires careful selection of texts that exemplify the genre's key characteristics and align with students' confidence levels, motivation, prior knowledge, and cultural understanding (Derewianka, 1990; Chaisiri, 2010; Kongpetch, 2003; Nunan, 1999).

In this study, the model texts "Damaged Earth" and "Uniform Wearing" were chosen because they were relevant to students' interests-one addressing environmental issues and the other relating to their daily lives.

The joint construction stage, which is the third in the genre-based method, is designed to demonstrate to students how to craft an argumentative essay by focusing on content, organization, and language. During this phase, the instructor helps students develop an argument map to outline their ideas and create an initial draft. Students then review and assess their own drafts using a "written argument checklist." Before revising their essays, they participate in peer review sessions, where they critique their classmates' work. This peer review process not only allows students to spot and correct errors they observe in others' writing but also provides them with new ideas and writing techniques from their peers.

In the final stage, independent construction, students write their essays autonomously. This phase encourages learners to reflect on their acquired knowledge, organize their ideas, and produce a coherent essay (Martin, 1992). After receiving guidance and feedback in earlier stages, students select their own topics, draft their essays, edit them based on peer and instructor feedback, and participate in "instructor-learner conferences" to address areas for improvement (Long & Richards, 1987). These conferences offer targeted support while learners refine their work. Following instructor feedback, students use a list of error correction symbols to collaboratively discuss and revise their essays in groups. This iterative process

allows learners to further develop their skills as both writers and evaluators of their peers' work.

The genre-based lessons emphasized understanding the purpose and audience of argumentative texts. By engaging with this approach, students gained a better grasp of the communicative objectives, audience considerations, and structural and linguistic features necessary for effective argumentative writing. This experience aimed to significantly improve their overall writing abilities.

#### D. Instruments

To gather data for this study, three writing assessments and semi-structured interviews were utilized. The writing assessments evaluated the participants' writing proficiency, while the interviews explored their views on how the genre-based approach influenced their skills in crafting argumentative essays.

To evaluate and compare participants' English writing skills, three writing tests were administered at different stages: before the study began, midway through, and at the end. The test topics were: 1) Opportunities for students of every age or just those who excel in school; 2) The advantages and disadvantages of using computers on a daily basis; and 3) Stress management techniques in contemporary society. These topics were chosen to engage participants by connecting to the broader theme of student life. Each test was designed to be completed within 30 minutes, with a minimum word count of 300 words. Tests were conducted simultaneously for both groups receiving genre-based instruction at different times to maintain consistency. During the test, participants were forbidden to use textbooks, dictionaries, or notes.

According to Glasswell, Parr & Aikman in 2001, Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning scoring rubrics were used to evaluate the pre-test, progress test, and post-test. The goal of this rubric is to evaluate writing proficiency using seven criteria: audience awareness and purpose; content; organisation; language use; grammar; spelling; and punctuation. The final three criteria, which dealt with technical details, were categorised as surface features, whereas the first four, which concentrated on the text's core, were categorised as deep characteristics. On a scale of 1 (least proficient) to 6 (most proficient), each criterion was assigned a number.

To further investigate participants' opinions regarding the efficacy of the genre-based method to teaching and learning argumentative writing, semi-structured interviews were also held. For the writing examinations, four participants with the highest scores, four with average scores, and four with the lowest scores were chosen for interviews. These interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to ensure clarity and depth in responses.

#### E. Procedures

The study spanned 12 weeks and was divided into two six-week phases. There was pretest for both groups before the course began. In the initial stage, Group 1, the first experimental group received genre-based instruction through weekly two-hour sessions, while Group 2 was taught using a process-based approach. At the completion of this phase, group 1 and group 2 finished a progress test.

In the second phase, the instruction methods were swapped: Group 2 was then given genre-based instruction, and Group 1 received process-based instruction. Each group completed a post-test two days following the conclusion of the second phase. A week after the post-test, 12 individuals from both groups participated in semi-structured interviews to get qualitative input.

### 4. Results

To evaluate the writing proficiency of participants, the outcomes of the three writing exams were analysed using SPSS (known as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 16.0. For each of among three tests, descriptive statistics were used to calculate the frequency, mean scores, as well as standard deviations. In addition, the average scores for each test between the two groups were compared using Independent Samples t-Tests. t-Tests on Paired Samples were utilised to compare the mean scores on the three tests and the four deep features within each group before and after the study in order to look at changes over time.

#### A. Writing Performance of Participants in the Two Groups

Table 2 displays the descriptive information regarding the participants' performance on the three writing assessments.

The document starts here. Copy and paste the content in the paragraphs. Based on the data presented in Table 1, the pretest mean scores for the first group ( $M = 2.4$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) and the second group ( $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) were relatively low on the six-point scale. In the progress test, group 1 achieved a mean score of 3.45 ( $SD = 0.58$ ), which was above average and exceeded the performance of group 2, which had a mean score of 3.0 ( $SD = 0.56$ ). Both groups showed significantly higher mean scores by the post-test; on the same scale, group 1 scored  $M = 3.65$  ( $SD = 0.56$ ) and group 2 scored  $M = 4.30$  ( $SD = 0.68$ ).

The Independent Samples t-Test was utilised to assess and compare the participants' writing performance mean scores of group 1 and group 2. The results showed that both groups' writing skills were comparable both before and during the study. More specifically, the progress test findings showed that both genre-based and process-based instructional approaches had a favourable effect on participants' argumentative essay writing skills at the beginning of the research. This implies that

Table 2  
Pretest, progress test, and posttest descriptive statistics for the both groups

Writing test	Group	Minimum	Maximum	Medium	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	Group 1	1.6	3.2	2.4	.50
	Group 2	1.6	3.2	2.32	.55
Progress Test	Group 1	3.1	4.6	3.45	.58
	Group 2	2.1	3.6	3.0	.56
Post-test	Group 1	3.1	4.6	3.65	.56
	Group 2	3.1	5.0	4.3	.68



by the end of the first phase, the efficacy of both teaching approaches was equivalent. Nevertheless, after the trial was over, group 2 outperformed group 1 in terms of writing. Participants who received process-based instruction first and genre-based instruction second showed greater improvements in their writing skills than those who experienced the reverse sequence of instructional methods.

### B. Participants in the Two Groups' Writing Performance

Three distinct stages of the participants' writing performance were assessed and compared using the Paired Samples t-Test: before the study, in-between phases, and after the study, within each group. For the first group, Compared to before the study, the average writing results during and after the study were much higher. Nonetheless, there was no discernible variation in the results acquired during and following the research. This suggests that genre-based instruction improved participants' writing abilities, while process-based instruction did not show a noticeable impact on group 1's performance in argumentative essay writing.

In contrast, for group 2, mean scores during and after the study were significantly higher than those before the study, with scores after the study surpassing those obtained in-between the study phases. This demonstrates that genre-based instruction notably enhanced participants' writing skills.

Regardless of whether the genre-based educational technique was utilised in the beginning or second phase of the research, the statistical analysis shows that, overall, it was advantageous for learners. Moreover, findings suggest that initiating writing instruction with a process-based approach, followed by genre-based instruction, was particularly effective in improving writing skills.

### C. The Deep Features Writing Performance of the Participants

#### 1) Deep Features Criteria

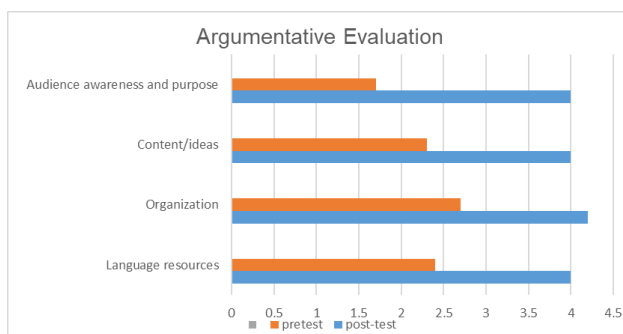


Fig. 2. Mean scores for group 2 on the pretest and posttest deep features

Four essential writing features (audience awareness, purpose, content, organisation, and language resources) were tested for changes in mean scores before and after the study for each group using the Paired-Samples t-Test. The results demonstrated that the writing skills of participants improved in all these areas following the research. The mean scores for both groups on the pretest and post-test are shown in Figures 1 and 2. These figures highlight that, despite coming from a culture

influenced by Confucian philosophy, participants enhanced their proficiency in the essential aspects of argumentative essay writing when provided with learning opportunities.

### *The perspectives of the participants regarding the application of genre-based teaching methods, How to Write Argumentative Essay*

This study aimed to explore learners' attitudes toward genre-based instruction. In order to accomplish this, a six-question interview was used to find out how participants felt about the efficacy of teaching argumentative essays using a genre-based method. The participant response indicated that the genre-based strategy had a noteworthy effect on the participants' capacity to write argumentative essays. Additionally, the study evaluated participants' opinions on the effectiveness of the three instructional phases: acquiring field knowledge, text modeling, and collaborative construction.

... By examining model texts, I identify my areas for improvement. I also understand my audience better and focus on persuading them effectively..." (*Han from the high condition*)

According to the participants, the four different stages of training were beneficial to assisting them improve and strengthen their ideas as well as in assessing the language and content of the argumentation structures in their writings. Regarding the advantages of the four teaching strategies—peer review, redrafting, instructor-student conferences, and initial draft revision—the respondents stated that these strategies were helpful in identifying drawbacks in their own work as well as those of their peers.

... When the instructor rectifies my writing and I am able to identify my errors, it makes me pleased....(*Hang from the average condition*)

Participants' sentiments towards the genre-based approach were better than their attitudes towards the writing approaches they had studied.

... Compared to the last method, this one is more scientific as it aids in my comprehension of the writing task's qualities and enhances my capacity for concept organisation....(*Chung from the high condition*)

Each participant reported that this method was advantageous because it enhanced their writing skills, generated better ideas, clarified the purpose of their writing, and enabled them to write more efficiently and rapidly.

... I have learned how to structure my ideas, use transition words effectively, and pinpoint the key content that should be included in my essay..."(*Van from the average condition*)

Upon being offered the opportunity to partake in more writing classes that employ the genre-based method, every participant expressed their desire to delve deeper into the technique for alternative objectives.

... I noticed that my writing had improved from earlier attempts. Thus, enrolling in further classes will progressively assist me in strengthening my knowledge and teaching me how to write a strong argumentative essay.... (*Trang from the low condition*)

When questioned for more general comments on the genre-based approach, all of the participants stated that they liked

learning to write using this method and that the steps and strategies used in the courses were very helpful for improving their writing skills.

.. This strategy appeals to me since it is practical and concentrates on the essential ideas of the genre. I can write articles on my own because of the writing techniques I instructed in class...(Cam from the average condition)

The results of the interviews indicate that even though the study participants had no prior experience writing argumentative essays, they had an overwhelmingly favourable perspective on the usage of the genre-based strategy in their EFL argumentative writing class. Because of how well this method worked for them in terms of writing improvement, every participant chose it over other methods.

### 5. Discussions

The findings of the present research demonstrated that participants' abilities to write argumentative essays were much better by the genre-based strategy. The findings of this study are consistent with earlier studies conducted by Kongpetch (2003), Udomyamokkul (2004), Ferreira (2007), and Promwinai (2010), which demonstrated that students gained greater control over the structure, logic, and language use of their writings. Participants in this study enhanced their performance of writing by effectively managing key argumentative features, including audience awareness and purpose, content, organization, as well as language resources. The results of post-test indicated that participants were more adept at incorporating these elements into their essays. This heightened awareness can be attributed to the stages and techniques employed in the genre-based approach. This approach supports Hammond et al.'s (1992) view that every phase in the cycle of teaching and learning plays a distinct role in aiding learners' writing development. The stages and techniques provided participants with opportunities for self-exploration and collaborative discussions with peers and instructors. This method is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of developmental proximal, which highlights the importance of social interaction and active engagement in the process of meaningful learning.

The findings of the interviews demonstrated that the participants' opinions of the genre-based method and its contribution to their capacity to write argumentative essays were generally favourable. Their favorable opinions were linked to the progress observed in their writing performance. Participants noted the advantages of the genre-based method over other approaches previously used in their writing classes. This approach helped them grasp the purpose and structure of the genre they were writing, which, in turn, boosted their confidence and self-belief in their writing skills. These findings are consistent with research by Flowerdew (2000), Kongpetch (2003), and Swami (2008), which demonstrated that the genre-based approach enhances students' control over genre-specific structures and language features by offering practical writing experiences and increasing their confidence. Additionally, participants expressed a strong interest in continuing to use this approach and exploring its application for various writing

purposes.

The improvement in participants' skills in writing argumentative essays, along with their positive attitudes toward the genre-based approach, underscores the effectiveness of this method. The findings suggest that genre-based instruction not only enhances participants' argumentative writing abilities but also fosters a positive perspective on their learning process and writing development.

### 6. Conclusion and Implications

The results of the study showed that while group 1 participants who received both phase 1 and phase 2 of the program did not noticeably enhance their writing, genre-based those involved from the second group who received both genre-based and process-based instruction in the first and second phases of the program dramatically enhanced their writing performance when treatment was given at different times. The current study's results attested to the participants' noticeably improved ability to write argumentative essays in terms of their understanding of the text's audience and purpose, composition, structure, and language use. Following the experiment, the participants were optimistic about the application of genre-based guidance to the instruction of writing argumentative essays and gained more confidence in their writing abilities.

The study's findings have five main ramifications for second language writing pedagogy. Firstly, it's apparent that the teacher guides students towards becoming better writers by assigning multiple crucial assignments like illustrating and providing guidance. With the goal of helping students in overcoming obstacles, the teacher must be very helpful, readily available, and well-prepared (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

Secondly, in order to support and encourage students to feel prepared to organise and communicate their thoughts, the instructor should think about writing techniques at each level of the writing process. "Writing instruction must begin with the more fundamental processes whereby writers get their thoughts in the first place and then get them underway," as Shaughnessy (1977) notes. With the goal to get the students interested in the subject matter, the instructor should assign engaging assignments. According to Taylor (1981), the writing assignment is engaging enough if it allows students to become deeply engaged with the subject and consistently come up with topics for writing.

Thirdly, mistakes made by the pupils should be used by the teacher as real teaching materials. To encourage students to collaborate on their peers' writing and address one another's suggestions, the teacher may provide revision "checklists" and "peer help worksheets." Since "it is more fun for them to correct other students' errors than their own," Klassen (1991) claims that editing the essay offers students an engaging exercise.

Fourth, a variety of writing assignments should be included in writing classes that use the genre-based approach in order to provide students with a variety of meaningful activities. Conventional tests for essays are inadequate for assessing every aspect of the process of learning (White, 1994). On the other hand, evaluation of portfolios is more accurate and appropriate for this purpose, as it provides clear and objective criteria for

both teachers and students during the final evaluation. Portfolios offer a comprehensive record of students' progress throughout the writing course, enabling more effective assessment. This method not only enhances students' writing skills (Aydin, 2010) but also fosters self-assessment and reflection (Campbell, 1998).

Finally, Teachers have observed that participants' positive attitudes significantly motivate them to persist in using genre-based methods during writing workshops. Choosing input texts that match the requirements of learners, hobbies, and competency levels is crucial for the successful implementation of genre-based guidance (Triastuti, 2011). To fulfil the above requirement, teachers must be skilled in evaluating and adapting materials to provide suitable input texts, as emphasized by Triastuti.

The study achieved its objectives; however, the small sample size of ten participants per group somewhat limited the study's external validity. Another limitation was the lack of exploration into how Vietnamese cultural factors influenced participants' writing. Therefore, more investigation is required to fully explore how cultural factors affect the argumentative essay writing of Vietnamese EFL students.

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