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PRODUCT, PROCESS AND GENRE APPROACHES TO EFL WRITING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS FOR UZBEK HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: This article compares the theoretical foundations and pedagogical characteristics of product, process, and genre approaches to EFL writing and examines their relevance to Uzbek higher education. The analysis shows that their complementary strengths address different linguistic, developmental, and rhetorical difficulties documented among Uzbek university learners.

Key words: EFL writing, product approach, process approach, genre approach, writing instruction, higher education, Uzbekistan.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada EFL yozuvini o‘qitishda mahsulot, jarayon va janr yondashuvlarining nazariy asoslari hamda pedagogik xususiyatlari qiyoslanadi va ularning O‘zbekiston oliy ta’limidagi ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Tahlil ushbu yondashuvlarning o‘zaro to‘ldiruvchi xususiyatlari talabalarning lingvistik, rivojlantiruvchi va ritorik yozuv muammolariga javob berishini ko‘rsatadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: EFL yozuvi, mahsulot yondashuvi, jarayon yondashuvi, janr yondashuvi, yozuvni o‘qitish, oliy ta’lim, O‘zbekiston.

Аннотация: В статье сопоставляются теоретические основы и педагогические особенности продуктового, процессного и жанрового подходов к обучению письму на английском языке и рассматривается их значение для высшего образования Узбекистана. Анализ показывает, что взаимодополняющие возможности этих подходов соответствуют различным языковым, развивающим и риторическим трудностям студентов.

Ключевые слова: письмо на английском языке, продуктовый подход, процессный подход, жанровый подход, обучение письму, высшее образование, Узбекистан.

Introduction. Writing is a central component of university study because students are expected to communicate knowledge, develop arguments and produce texts for academic and professional purposes. In EFL contexts, however, successful writing requires more than grammatical and lexical control. Learners must generate and organize ideas, establish cohesion and coherence and adapt the organization and language of a text to its purpose and audience. Evidence from Uzbekistan confirms difficulties across these dimensions. Abramova found problems with language use, cohesion, coherence, organization, academic vocabulary and the development of an individual voice among undergraduate learners [2; P. 47-48] while Yozilova identified limited instructional guidance and feedback, insufficient writing practice, unfamiliarity with academic conventions, language barriers and weak academic literacy among 181 MA students from four

Uzbek higher education institutions [16; P. 220, 232-236]. These findings indicate that difficulties in university writing extend beyond grammatical accuracy and require attention to both the development and communicative function of written texts.

Approaches to EFL writing differ in how they address these demands. Product-oriented instruction emphasizes the completed text and its linguistic and organizational qualities whereas process pedagogy focuses on how a text develops through planning, drafting, revising and editing. Genre pedagogy extends this focus to the social and rhetorical context by examining how purpose, audience and disciplinary conventions shape textual choices. Abdiolimova presents these orientations as complementary because structured language work, recursive composing and genre-sensitive instruction contribute different elements to writing development [1; P. 445-446]. This comparison is particularly relevant to Uzbekistan, where product-oriented practices remain prominent. Yulchiyeva describes the product approach as widely used and notes its emphasis on grammar, spelling, punctuation, organization, model texts and final written output [18; P. 1600]. Her study found that product-oriented instruction improved grammatical accuracy, sentence structure and organization [18; P. 1601-1602] but provided fewer opportunities for independent expression, while teachers observed difficulties with argument development and critical engagement [18; P. 1602]. Thus, formal accuracy remains important but it represents only one component of effective writing.

Process and genre approaches address dimensions that receive less attention in strongly product-oriented instruction. Process writing provides opportunities to generate ideas, draft, receive feedback, reconsider organization and revise meaning before editing while genre instruction connects linguistic choices with communicative purpose, audience and rhetorical organization. These functions are relevant to Uzbekistan because local studies identify both coherence-related difficulties and restricted familiarity with academic genres. Yozilova and Maksudova found that familiarity among 181 MA students was concentrated mainly on academic essays and research papers while other genres were considerably less familiar [17; P. 329-330]. The problem therefore concerns not only how students develop a text but also their ability to produce different types of texts for particular purposes. Against this background this article compares the theoretical foundations and pedagogical characteristics of product, process and genre approaches, examines the challenges and practices identified in Uzbek higher education and considers their implications for more effective writing instruction in Uzbekistan. Rather than identifying one approach as universally superior, the analysis examines what each contributes and how these contributions correspond to needs documented in the local context.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a comparative literature-review approach, drawing on theoretical and pedagogical discussions of product, process and genre instruction together with empirical and context-specific studies of EFL and academic writing in Uzbek higher education. The purpose is interpretive comparison rather than exhaustive systematic coverage. Studies from Uzbekistan are used primarily to identify local writing problems and instructional practices while theoretical and pedagogical publications provide the basis for explaining how the three approaches respond to them. The analysis focuses on the conception of writing underlying each approach and the instructional practices that follow from it with particular attention to linguistic accuracy, model texts, planning, drafting, revision, feedback, purpose, audience, rhetorical organization and genre conventions. This framework allows the approaches to be compared according to their pedagogical functions rather than simply their labels.

The product approach places the completed text at the centre of instruction with emphasis on grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, sentence construction, organization, spelling and punctuation. Rasulova and Ataullayeva describe product-oriented practices that include controlled writing, paragraph-pattern exercises, model imitation and systematic attention to formal accuracy [11; P. 2-4]. Such explicit guidance can support EFL learners who need models of successful writing and controlled practice with the linguistic and organizational features expected in the final text. Yulchiyeva's findings support this contribution: students receiving product-oriented instruction improved particularly in grammar, sentence formation and text organization [18; P. 1601-1602]. However, its limitation becomes apparent when conformity to a model becomes the main indicator of successful writing. In the same study 70% of the product-group students reported frustration with limited opportunities to express their own ideas while teachers observed that students could reproduce model structures but had difficulty developing more complex arguments [18; P. 1602]. Product instruction therefore provides useful linguistic and structural support but is less sufficient when learners need to develop, reconsider and reorganize content independently.

The process approach is grounded in the cognitive conception of writing developed by Flower and Hayes whose cognitive process theory presents composing as recursive with writers moving among planning, text generation and reviewing rather than following a fixed linear sequence [5; P. 365-387]. This conception is reflected in Salieva's description of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing with writers able to return to earlier stages when ideas or texts require reconsideration [12; P. 6-8]. Each stage serves a different function: prewriting supports idea generation and organization, drafting produces an initial version, revision involves substantive changes to content and structure and editing focuses more specifically on linguistic and mechanical accuracy [12; P. 7-8]. Process writing also incorporates collaboration and formative feedback. Salieva connects it with cooperative and communicative learning through the exchange of ideas and assistance during composing [12; P. 9-10] while Rakhimova describes process writing as cyclical and developmental, incorporating peer and teacher feedback and reflection alongside drafting and revision [10; P. 1035-1037]. Sociocultural theory provides an additional foundation for these practices: Lantolf and Thorne explain language development through socially mediated activity [7] and Turaeva applies this perspective to writing through modelling, collaboration, guided feedback and iterative revision [15; P. 414]. Local empirical evidence supports these principles. Mansurov's process-oriented group used brainstorming, mind mapping, peer review, instructor feedback, revision, and multiple drafts and demonstrated stronger gains in content, organization, coherence, and overall writing performance than the product-oriented group [8; P. 223-224]. The process approach is therefore particularly relevant where learners require support not only with linguistic accuracy but also with developing, evaluating, and reorganizing their ideas.

Genre pedagogy adds a functional and rhetorical dimension to writing instruction. Swales conceptualizes academic genres in relation to communicative purposes and discourse communities [14] while Martin and Rose situate genres within socially organized patterns of meaning [9]. Bahromova similarly describes academic genres as socially constructed communicative events in which rhetorical moves, formal register and linguistic choices are shaped by the purposes texts are expected to fulfil [3; P. 211-212]. These foundations explain why genre instruction focuses not only on grammatical form but also on how textual choices function within particular academic contexts. Bahromova operationalizes this perspective through the Teaching-Learning Cycle which moves from deconstruction and modelling toward joint and independent construction and Move Analysis which makes the rhetorical functions of text sections explicit [3; P. 211-214]. Sodiqova likewise emphasizes genre conventions, rhetorical structures, explicit instruction, authentic tasks, modelling

and communicative purpose [13; P. 118-124]. Model texts are therefore retained in genre pedagogy but unlike product-oriented imitation, they are analysed to show how linguistic and structural choices serve particular communicative purposes.

The comparison reveals three distinct but related instructional orientations. Product pedagogy clarifies what an acceptable text should look like by providing linguistic and structural models; process pedagogy explains how a text can be developed and improved through recursive composing, feedback, and revision; and genre pedagogy explains why a text takes a particular form according to its purpose, audience and disciplinary context. These differences provide the basis for examining how each approach responds to the writing challenges identified in Uzbek higher education.

DISCUSSION

Studies conducted in Uzbekistan show that students' writing difficulties extend across linguistic, organizational, developmental, and rhetorical dimensions. Abramova found that learners continued to struggle with cohesion and coherence even though approximately 88% reported preparing an outline before writing; participants associated these difficulties with inadequate knowledge of cohesive devices, academic vocabulary, structure, and organization [2; P. 48]. Yozilova similarly identified limited instructional guidance and feedback, insufficient writing practice, unfamiliarity with academic-writing conventions, language barriers, L1-related difficulties and weak academic literacy among MA students from four Uzbek higher education institutions [16; P. 220, 232-236]. These findings show that writing problems occur at several levels simultaneously and cannot be addressed through grammatical instruction alone.

At the instructional level the literature points to a continuing emphasis on formal accuracy and completed texts. Yulchiyeva characterizes product-oriented instruction as widely used in Uzbekistan, with attention to final output, grammar, spelling, punctuation, organization and model reproduction [18; P. 1600], while Mansurov similarly notes that traditional product-based instruction remains prevalent in Uzbek educational institutions [8; P. 225]. Turaeva places this tendency within a wider institutional context, identifying curriculum constraints, limited teacher preparation, misalignment between curriculum and assessment, resource limitations and continued reliance on traditional approaches [15; P. 416-417]. The persistence of product-oriented practice is therefore related not only to methodological preference but also to the conditions in which writing is taught.

Cohesion and coherence illustrate the limitations of relying mainly on final-product correction. Abramova's participants reported difficulty connecting and organizing ideas despite generally using outlines [2; P. 48] while Yozilova found similar problems with cohesion, coherence, academic vocabulary and structuring ideas [16; P. 231-235]. Process pedagogy responds directly to these difficulties by distinguishing substantive revision from linguistic editing. Planning establishes an initial organization while revision allows writers to reconsider relationships among ideas after producing a draft [12; P. 7-8]. Mansurov provides empirical support for this practice: students who worked with multiple drafts, peer review and teacher feedback showed stronger development in coherence, content, and organization [8; P. 223-224]. Process instruction is therefore relevant to the Uzbek context because it creates opportunities to address text-level problems that cannot be resolved through end-stage grammatical correction alone.

Feedback is another documented weakness. Yozilova found that 41% of 181 surveyed MA students identified limited guidance and feedback as a major writing challenge while 40% reported insufficient time for writing practice [16; P. 232-233]. Process pedagogy addresses this problem by placing feedback between drafts when students can still modify meaning, organization, and

language. Rasulova and Ataullayeva provide an example of this developmental function: students participated in establishing assessment criteria, evaluated peers' writing, reflected on comments and subsequently improved their texts [11; P. 2-3]. Their instructional sequence also combines model-text analysis, language practice, planning, discussion, feedback, drafting, self- or peer-assessment and finalization [11; P. 5]. This demonstrates that explicit structural support and process-oriented development can function together rather than as opposing practices.

Genre awareness represents a different challenge. Yozilova and Maksudova found that Uzbekistani MA students were most familiar with academic essays and research papers while familiarity with other academic genres was considerably lower [17; P. 329-330]. Genre pedagogy responds by making communicative purpose, audience, rhetorical structure and genre-specific language explicit. Bahromova's quasi-experimental study supports this approach: students receiving genre-based instruction significantly outperformed the traditional product-oriented group particularly in rhetorical structure and lexical appropriateness [3; P. 214-215]. Rasulova and Ataullayeva provide a specific Uzbek example reporting difficulties with writing annotations and attempts to construct them through direct translation from Uzbek [11; P. 6]. Their instructional response combines discussion of purpose and audience with analysis of structure, functional phrases, academic vocabulary, linking devices, independent writing, peer evaluation and revision [11; P. 6]. Genre analysis therefore clarifies what a text is expected to accomplish while process practices provide the means to develop it.

Genre pedagogy is especially relevant to non-linguistic and professional higher education. Israilova examines ESP instruction in medical, pharmaceutical, engineering and IT-related programmes, where students encounter professional texts such as research abstracts, clinical documentation, technical manuals, laboratory protocols and engineering reports [6; P. 3-7]. Her findings further suggest that professional texts become more useful when students move beyond vocabulary exposure and apply linguistic resources in meaningful disciplinary output [6; P. 7-10]. General essay-writing competence alone is therefore insufficient for these contexts. Students also need to understand how vocabulary, register, rhetorical organization and language choices function within the communicative practices of their disciplines.

Taken together the evidence indicates that the three approaches address different but interconnected needs. Product-oriented instruction provides explicit linguistic and structural support; process instruction addresses idea development, drafting, coherence, feedback and revision; and genre instruction develops awareness of purpose, audience, rhetorical structure, and academic or professional conventions. This complementary relationship is also supported in the reviewed literature. Elmuratova argues that combining product and process approaches can address both the mechanics and creative development of writing [4; P. 37-38]. Abdiolimova emphasizes the value of combining process writing, grammatical accuracy, idea development and genre-sensitive instruction [1; P. 444-446] while Rasulova and Ataullayeva conclude that the strengths of different approaches can be combined to reduce their individual limitations [11; P. 7].

Such integration should nevertheless be systematic rather than a simple mixture of techniques. A model text can first make linguistic and organizational expectations visible, preserving the main strength of product pedagogy and then be analysed for communicative purpose, audience, and rhetorical moves to develop genre awareness. Students can use this understanding to plan and draft their own texts, receive formative feedback and revise content and organization according to process principles before editing grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. Implementation, however, depends on institutional conditions. Mansurov identifies rigid curricula, examination-driven instruction, and teacher preparation as barriers to process writing [8; P. 225], while Turaeva

identifies limited teacher training, assessment misalignment, resource constraints and continued reliance on traditional approaches [15; P. 416-417]. Effective integration therefore requires not only changes in classroom methodology but also sufficient time for drafting and feedback, appropriate genre models, aligned assessment and teacher preparation.

RESULTS

The comparative analysis shows that product, process, and genre approaches are based on different but complementary conceptions of writing. Product pedagogy foregrounds the linguistic and structural characteristics of the completed text while process pedagogy focuses on the recursive development of ideas and texts through planning, drafting, feedback, revision and editing. Genre pedagogy extends this perspective by connecting textual choices with communicative purpose, audience and disciplinary context.

These distinctions correspond to the writing difficulties documented in Uzbek higher education. Although formal accuracy remains important, students also experience problems with cohesion, coherence, organization, independent idea development, instructional feedback, writing practice, academic conventions and genre familiarity [2; P. 47-48; 16; P. 220, 232-236]. The challenges are therefore multidimensional and cannot be addressed adequately through a single instructional focus.

The strengths of the three approaches respond to different aspects of these difficulties. Product-oriented instruction provides explicit models, grammatical accuracy and structural control as demonstrated by Yulchiyeva [18; P. 1601-1602]. Process-oriented instruction supports planning, multiple drafting, formative feedback, substantive revision, coherence and organization as shown by Mansurov [8; P. 223-224]. Genre instruction develops rhetorical awareness, understanding of communicative purpose, and knowledge of academic and professional conventions, supported by Bahromova and the genre-awareness evidence reported by Yozilova and Maksudova [3; P. 214-215; 17; P. 329-330].

The results therefore do not identify one approach as universally superior. Rather they indicate that product, process and genre approaches address different components of writing competence and are most effective when their pedagogical functions are matched to the documented needs of learners in Uzbek higher education.

Conclusion. This article compared the theoretical foundations and pedagogical characteristics of product, process and genre approaches and examined their relevance to EFL writing instruction in Uzbek higher education. The approaches differ mainly in the dimension of writing they foreground: product pedagogy emphasizes the linguistic quality and formal organization of the completed text; process pedagogy treats writing as recursive development through planning, drafting, feedback, revision, and editing; and genre pedagogy focuses on how texts are shaped by communicative purpose, audience, rhetorical organization, and disciplinary conventions.

Evidence from Uzbekistan suggests that each approach addresses a different aspect of students' writing needs. Product-oriented instruction provides explicit models and attention to language and can improve grammar, sentence structure and organization [18; P. 1601-1602] although its limitations become apparent when model reproduction and final-product accuracy dominate instruction. Process-oriented instruction addresses difficulties with cohesion, coherence, organization, feedback and writing practice [2; P. 48; 16; P. 232-235] with Mansurov providing local evidence for the benefits of drafting, peer feedback, revision, and reflection [8; P. 223-225]. Genre pedagogy addresses another documented need: restricted familiarity with academic genres [17; P. 329-330], difficulties with annotations [11; P. 6] and discipline-specific writing demands in ESP contexts [6; P. 3-10] support explicit attention to purpose, audience, rhetorical moves, and genre conventions.

The main implication is therefore not to replace product instruction with process or genre pedagogy, but to combine their complementary strengths. Model analysis can provide linguistic and structural support; planning and revision can address idea development, cohesion and coherence; formative feedback can support writing while the text is still developing; and genre analysis can develop awareness of academic and professional conventions. Editing can retain the necessary attention to linguistic accuracy. Such integration addresses the linguistic, developmental, and rhetorical dimensions of writing rather than treating any one of them as sufficient on its own.

Implementation, however, depends on institutional conditions. Teachers require preparation in process feedback and genre analysis, curricula need sufficient flexibility for drafting and revision and assessment needs to account for communicative and textual competence alongside linguistic accuracy [8; P. 225; 15; P. 416-417]. Effective EFL writing instruction in Uzbek higher education therefore requires closer alignment between what students are expected to write, how they are supported in developing their texts, and the communicative purposes those texts are intended to fulfil.

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